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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS A WAY OF KNOWING:  
An Application of Recent Educational Theory  
to Education in the Church

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We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read and recommend to the School of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS A WAY OF KNOWING: An Application of Recent Educational Theory to Education in the Church, submitted by John Locksley McNeill, B.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Divinity.



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## INTRODUCTION

There is a significant relationship between the way a scientist thinks and the way that a child learns science. There is a significant relationship between the way an historian thinks and the way that a child learns history. Such is the case with every subject area of systematic study, for underlying all inquiry, both disciplined and developmental, is a basic way of knowing. The basic way of knowing is a conceptualization of the powers to describe, explain, explore, infer, test, and invent in the process of knowledge-making. The educator's function is to facilitate the development of the basic way of knowing so that the learner achieves eventually the capacity of disciplined inquiry. Carrying out the tasks involved in this function is, in itself, a matter of disciplined inquiry involving a unique field of study.

The Christian educator has the opportunity of participating in this unique field of study. In so far as the Christian educator sees his role simply as one of transmitting established ideas or creeds he remains an agent of indoctrination. In so far as the Christian educator limits his function to that of influencing the young-in-faith he participates in the common enterprise of character-building. Certainly





the nature-in-faith, whether as Christian parent, teacher, pastor or professor, will always act to influence those in his tutelage by the very nature of his own nature understanding. But the Christian as educator, participating in the study of the ways of knowing and of the extension of knowledge, functions further to direct the nature and course of Christian growth. He participates in the Church's ongoing task of reforming the meaning of Christian commitment. He does so, not as theologian per se, but as the instructor of the young-in-faith in the ways of knowing theologically. The educative task of the Church is here defined as that of educating for the continuous 're-formation' of Christian commitment.

The purpose of this thesis is not to show that educating for reform (in the sense of 're-forming' understanding) must become the function of Christian education; for, indeed, this has always been a function of Christian education. The intent here is to develop a more adequate awareness of the nature of the function, and of the responsibility of the educator in it, in light of recent educational theory. It is considered, by the candidate, significant that, as this endeavor takes written form, the Secretary of the General Council of the United Church of Canada, Ernest Long, should make the following statement:



There is an explosion in education throughout the world, and the amount of new knowledge, the technical achievements, the increase in population, the urgency of expectations in the minds of youth, all these add up to a new concept of education and to vast expenditures in money and life for the cause of education. This explosion in education is not going to fade away. Unless education within the Church is continually updated in content and method, the out-reach of the Church in education will diminish even more. This is all the more true because secular education is becoming involved in all the human problems with which Christians have been most deeply concerned, -- war, peace, sex and family, race relations, human values, social and national development, the nature of man himself.

While we have been fighting a rear-guard action to preserve specific courses of religious instruction in our public schools, it may be that we have been losing by default the far more important struggle to influence creatively the understanding of scientific, mathematical, cultural and historical values, as well as the specifically moral and religious values that are implicit in the whole process of education.<sup>1</sup> (Italics mine.)

and further that:

This concept of the Church as a working Christian

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<sup>1</sup>E.E. Long, "The Truth About the 'Crisis' in the Church", Observer, Vol. 29, No. 16, p. 13.





community means a change in emphases and methods in Christian education. We must continue to teach the meaning and history of the Christian faith, but we must also share more fully in the rediscovery of the Bible for youth and adults. Our Christian education organizations and our lay training centres should be laboratories where we learn by doing how to be the kind of Church that exists for others.<sup>2</sup>

It is to this general concern that this paper is specifically directed. In the first three chapters the basic way of knowing is examined from sociological, psychological and educational perspectives in preparation for applying its implications to Christian education.

In the first chapter, various factors impinging upon the present state of Christian knowing are examined to illustrate the claim that there is a need for systematizing the education of youth in the ways of knowing 'theologically'. This examination will centre on the process of secularization and on the breakdown of Christian knowing.

In the second chapter an attempt is made to clarify the nature of knowing. The epistemological position apparent in this discussion may be characteristically called pragmatic. There is no intention, however, to exist in any particular philosophical "ism". The position developed is simply held to be an adequate account of how secular man knows; and, more particularly, how he structures

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<sup>2</sup>ibid., page 15.



and disciplines his knowing.

The third chapter is an examination of the concept of education as a distinct area of study --- as a discipline. The discussion will be mainly supportive with the intention of relating the concept to the field of Christian education. The heavy reliance on the theory of Marc Belth at this point is due to its uniqueness as a statement of educative function. The danger of accepting uncritically any one theory of education is avoided, as will be noted later, because of the self-corrective task of education.

Finally, the discussion moves into its critical stage of defining Christian education as the development of the ways of knowing theologically and, consequently, as the development of creativity in Christian understanding. This is achieved by applying the demands, requirements and concerns, identified in the first three chapters, to the educative function of the Church. The intention here is to establish recognition of the essential function of Christian education in expanding the Church's understanding of its commitment and mission in a secular world. The motivational basis of this endeavor is the desire to enable Christian youth to better participate in the continuous 're-formation' of Christian commitment.





## C H A P T E R   O N E

## SECULARIZATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The "Religious" - "Secular" Dichotomy

It is characteristic of the modern Christian that he orders the world about him to some extent in terms of dichotomies. The dichotomies of good and evil, right and wrong, 'heaven' and 'hell', and the sacred and the profane, for example, are so basic to his understanding that the contemporary Christian finds it extremely difficult to organize entirely new areas of understanding in any other but these (or similar) opposed categories. This point is cogently illustrated by Paul Tillich in his discussion of the exploration of outer space.<sup>1</sup> In asserting that space-science fiction is a limited expression of man's desire to transcend the realm of earth-bound experiences, Tillich points out that the imagined transterrestrial beings are "either glorified (angels and heavenly saints), or vilified duplications of the human figure (demons and

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Tillich, "The Effects of Space Exploration on Man's condition and Stature", The Future of Religions, (New York; Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 39-51.



inmates of hell)."<sup>2</sup> The implication is clearly that this type of reasoning is inappropriate for the understanding of space. The validity of dichotomic reasoning as a way of knowing the past or present does not validate in every new situation any particular dichotomy that one chooses to assert or maintain.

The attempt of Christian man to look at and organize his present and future growth in understanding has resulted in one such inappropriate dichotomy -- that of secular and religious ways of knowing. In the face of the knowledge explosion which has accompanied the technological development of the last century, it has seemed appropriate on the part of many people to uphold faith (as a way of knowing about God) as religious in contrast to doubt (as a way of knowing about the world) as secular. The assertion to be made here is that this dichotomy is inappropriate for an understanding of the ways of knowing.

The dichotomy of secular and religious ways of knowing is that pervasive one which underlies the narrowness of response on the part of some to both neo-orthodoxy and existentialism. The first is seen by many people, unfortunately, to have given up the world and the second is seen to have given up God regardless of what is said fully about the re-

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<sup>2</sup>ibid., p. 44.





relationship of the natural and the supernatural in either case. Further, it is actually this peculiarity of Christian thought which results in the polar theological extremes of biblical literalism and the death-of-God theology. Finally--it is, to some extent, this mode of reasoning that underlies the sense of irreconcilability of ~~various~~ doubt with the apparent requirements of faithful men on the part of a well-educated, successful, business man-citizen who, for example, has denied trying to fulfill his function as church elder because of this sense.

It is to this erroneous reasoning that Bishop Newbigin speaks in his work, Honest Religion For Secular Man. Newbigin suggests that there is no basic contradiction between the finality of biblical authority and the present authority of the Spirit:

To know God, the living God, leads to live in the constant expectancy of what is new, yet in the constant certainty that nothing which happens can contradict the reality of what has been revealed .... It means living a life of faith, which is a continuous exposure to the endlessly new doings of this faithful God in the affairs of the secular world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Lesslie Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man, (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 97f.



Newbigin suggests further that the life of faith is not identifiable with theological extremes:

It is neither a life without a sanctuary, nor a life gathered in static order round a fixed shrine. It is a life in which we need God continually, but never in the same place; in which our meeting with him is a summons to go out into the place where he is not, and in which his meeting is prepared for us in the place where we have gone out, often not knowing whether we went.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the Bishop speaks to the shortsightedness of the church elder described above as an example of the impasse reached by many Christians today:

The life of faith is a continually renewed victory over doubt, a continually renewed grasp of meaning in the midst of meaninglessness .... All knowing is an adventure. Knowing God is the supreme adventure which takes us out beyond everything that we can know ....<sup>5</sup>

Newbigin presents a refreshing view of a realistic theo-

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<sup>4</sup>ibid., p. 98

<sup>5</sup>ibid., p. 98



logical position in which one turns away neither from the world nor from the biblical witness. 'Faith' and 'doubt' are not disparate nor successive ways of knowing. They are complementary aspects of one way of knowing common to much human endeavor. Newbigin's theological insight and his pastoral perspective are combined to achieve his deep understanding of twentieth-century man. It is this understanding in which the thesis herein presented finds its justification.

### The Secularization of Purpose

Newbigin outlines three ways in which religion and the secular are seen to be opposed: the first in terms of state government, the second in terms of final authority, and the third in terms of the Christian life.<sup>6</sup> The dichotomy of religious and secular does very well to illuminate our understanding of the nature of government, of the type of authority men claim in decision-making, and of the attitudes of approach to the world; but just as it does not adequately delineate the ways of knowing neither does it delineate the purposes of knowing. For the Christian, in the latter case, "the only possible standpoint is that of

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<sup>6</sup>ibid., p. 123.





faith in Christ, in whom alone both God and the world are made known . . . ,"<sup>7</sup> Newbigin develops this point in his discussion of worship:

Christian worship does not direct our thoughts away from the world; it directs them to him who has come to the world . . . . It is in that act of divine grace that Christian worship finds its focus of attention, and it is precisely that act which gives the world its value. If we have to reject a pagan conception of worship which draws men's thoughts away from the world, we must also reject a formulation of Christian belief, and consequently a conception of Christian worship which removes attention from that act of God, that mighty deed done for us by one who is not ourselves but Another.<sup>8</sup>

The point is that, for the Christian there is no meaningful distinction between religious and secular purposes of knowing and consequently no real, let alone necessary, choice to be made in this regard. In choosing Jesus Christ, one chooses to know both the Other from whom Christ comes and the world to whom he comes. He is the 'way' who incorporates all ways and purposes of knowing.

It is in the above context that the secularization

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<sup>7</sup>ibid., p. 147

<sup>8</sup>ibid., p. 149





of purpose and the secularization of knowledge are to be understood. The word "purpose" is broadly meant to refer to what man is about, to what he identifies as his intention. The word "knowledge" is meant to refer to the conceptual organization of man's activity directed toward fulfilling his intention. The phrase "ways of knowing" refers to the processes by which the fulfilling activity is carried on. Secularization is understood in terms of Newbigin's definition of it as a historical process in which contemporary man is a part, and in which man has become increasingly aware of his part:

... it may be seen as the increasing assertion of the competence of human science and technics to handle human problems of every kind. In a biblical perspective ... this will be seen as man's entering into the freedom given to him in Christ, freedom from the control of all other powers, freedom for the mastery of the created world which was promised to man according to the Bible. At its best the secular spirit claims the freedom to deal with every man simply as man and not as the adherent of one religion or another, and to use all man's mastery over nature to serve the real needs of man.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>ibid., pp. 8 - 9



Modern man has become singular in his purpose which is technological development. Despite his apparent adherence to varying and opposing religious and ideological systems he has become united in a common history with a common fear and a common hope -- the fear of a single, but complete, disaster and the hope of a more just, equitable and technologically productive way of life.<sup>10</sup> It is in this respect that one can speak of the secularization of human purpose. Tillich paradigms the secularization of purpose in terms of the geometric concepts of the horizontal, the vertical, and the circular.<sup>11</sup> The circle represents the Greek ideal of finding fulfillment within the cosmos and its potential; the vertical line represents the search for meaning in what transcends the cosmos, that is, the divine; and the horizontal line represents the effort to control and transform the cosmos "in the service of God or man."<sup>12</sup> This latter dimension represents the high degree of secularization characteristic of the contemporary world. For Tillich, space exploration is the last step in the victory of the horizontal over the other dimensions.

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<sup>10</sup>ibid., p. 14

<sup>11</sup>Tillich, "The Effects of Space Exploration", p.40

<sup>12</sup>ibid., p. 40





Tillich indicates how far man has come in this process with regard to the purpose of knowing when he asserts that, "Tragic consequences of the discovery and expression of truth are no reason for giving up the attempts to discover and the obligation to express truth."<sup>13</sup> Just as the reformer must proclaim his message in the face of the dangerous consequences for the believer so also must the scientist search and express truth despite the dangerous possibilities inherent in that truth.

Tillich expresses the secularization of purpose in the present time more directly in answer to the question: For what? He suggests that the answer in terms of space exploration indicates how completely formalized the horizontal line has become; "The aim is to go forward for the sake of going forward, endlessly without a concrete focus."<sup>14</sup>

### The Secularization of Knowledge

The secularization of purpose for modern man can be seen most dramatically in that phenomenon which is the most obvious expression of it -- urbanism. Urbanism as the principle expression of secularized purpose represents the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 46.



secularization of knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Stewart Crysedale has provided a concise definition of this concept expressing clearly the character of secularized knowledge:

Urbanism means openness to new ideas, heterogeneity in relations, a high rate of personal interaction, rationality in reaching decisions. It implies a pluralistic system of authority, high exposure to mass and other media of communication, specialization in work and high mobility rates.<sup>16</sup>

Crysedale suggests two major effects of urbanism.<sup>17</sup> The first is normlessness characterized by rapid change and the breakdown of meaning. Tillich refers to this effect as "the exclusive surrender to the horizontal line ... forwardism ... (which) leads to the loss of any meaningful content and to complete emptiness."<sup>18</sup> The second effect noted by Crysedale is objectification. Nothing, not even man himself, can avoid taking on the character of becoming an object --- that which is to be studied, analyzed and, indeed, restructured. Tillich alludes to this effect in space

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<sup>15</sup>Harvey Cox, The Secular City (New York: MacMillan Co., 1965), pp. 4-5.

<sup>16</sup>Stewart, Crysedale, The Changing Church in Canada, (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1965), p. 25.

<sup>17</sup>ibid., p. 26.

<sup>18</sup>Tillich, "The Effects of Space Exploration", p.46.





studies when he refers to the process of demythologizing the earth. 'Mother' earth ceases to be the familiar ground, the kind sustainer of man, and becomes entirely calculable and manageable.<sup>19</sup>

Harvey Cox identifies the effects of normlessness and objectification as mobility and anonymity -- the two central aspects of the "shape" of urbanism or the society of technopolis.<sup>20</sup> He further identifies the "style" of urbanism or the culture of technopolis in terms of pragmatism and profanity.<sup>21</sup> In examining these characteristics the secularization of knowledge can be made apparent (and, significantly, less negative than it appears to be for Tillich and Crysedale.)

The character of urbanism in twentieth century society and culture is well explicated by Cox and shall be examined only briefly. The intent here is to draw from his account the characteristics of twentieth-century cognition that witness to its secularization. Anonymity is that "faceless and depersonalized"<sup>22</sup> condition of urbanism similar to that second effect which Crysedale describes and which

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<sup>19</sup>ibid., p. 45.

<sup>20</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup>ibid., p. 60.

<sup>22</sup>ibid., p. 39.



has here been called objectification.<sup>23</sup> Cox, however, clearly sees this condition much more positively than does Crysedale for, he suggests, it provides two major benefits to modern man: " ... first, that without it, life in a modern city could not be human, and second, that anonymity represents for many people a liberating even more than a threatening phenomenon."<sup>24</sup>

Urbanism has provided man with an enlarged area of activity. His range of communication has been extended and the number of reasonable alternatives from which he may choose has increased. Urban man is a freer man. However, the increased freedom of activity requires a greater responsibility in choosing. Much more is excluded in the making of a choice with greater freedom: and the other face of ex-

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<sup>23</sup>See above, p. 15. The term "objectification" is Tillich's, ("The Effects of Space Exploration", p. 45). It is worthwhile to note further that the two major effects of urbanism outlined by Crysedale are inclusive of all four technopolitan characteristics described by Cox. That is to say, "normlessness" includes both "mobility" and "profanity"; and "objectification" includes both "anonymity" and "pragmatism". The major differences in understanding between these scholars with regard to the consequences or characteristics of urbanism derive from, first, their methods -- Cox's analysis is much more thorough and critical than Crysedale's is meant to be; and, second, their purposes -- Crysedale seeks to overcome the effects of urbanism, whereas Cox seeks acceptance and use of the characteristics of the technopolis.

<sup>24</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 40





clusion (if anonymity is the first) is specialization.

Modern man has become increasingly specialized in his cognitive understanding. Specialized knowledge is precise, detailed and inventive.<sup>25</sup> It enables urban man to take cognizance of a wide range of diverse subjects and to relate even conflicting points of view not within all-inclusive systems but within groupings of specialized personnel around common problems.

Mobility is that "shallowness and lostness"<sup>26</sup> which Crysedale has called normlessness.<sup>27</sup> Cox, notes, however, that mobility has always been a vital characteristic of North American growth. It has also been a facility of individual achievement on this continent. Mobility, whether it be geographic, occupational, or social, is change; and urban man not only accustoms to change he values it favorably. Cognitive change or innovation is valued so far as it is progressive; that is, in so far as it increasingly enables man to incorporate and control the environment about

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<sup>25</sup>That is, as it acquires specificity and complexity it reproduces itself more rapidly, gaining breadth and depth, yet remaining within the bounds of its specialization. Where particularized fields of study have overrun their boundaries and merged, e.g. biophysics, social psychology or educational anthropology, the merger tends to become a characteristic specialization in itself.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., p. 50

<sup>27</sup>See above, p. 15





him. The machine development beginning with early industrialization and including present-day cybernation witnesses to the high valuation urban man places on innovation.

Pragmatism is that short-term focusing of modern man on particular problems requiring workable solutions. Cox defines this characteristic in the following manner:

We mean secular man's concern with the question "will it work?" Secular man does not occupy himself much with mysteries. He is little interested in anything that seems resistant to the application of human energy and intelligence. He judges ideas, as the dictionary suggests in its definition of pragmatism, by the "results they will achieve in practice." The world is viewed not as a unified metaphysical system but as a series of problems and projects.<sup>28</sup>

Life for urban man is a set of problems and knowledge is made up of the necessary, but highly provisional solutions.<sup>29</sup> Far from being a limitation, such secularized knowledge is easily accessible and extremely functional. Constantly increased and validated understanding becomes the rightful possession of man to apply and to multiply for further understanding and with new purposes.

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<sup>28</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 60

<sup>29</sup>ibid., p. 63



Pragmatism as a characteristic of the secularization of knowledge results both in a new kind of social unity and in pluralism. In the first case it draws together the specializations around particular problems in search of common solutions. In the second case it is that setting "in which a hodgepodge of human purposes and projects can thrive because each recognized itself as provisional and relative."<sup>30</sup>

Profanity as a characteristic of the style of the technopolis means for Cox;

... secular man's wholly terrestrial horizon, the disappearance of any supramundane reality defining his life .... we do not suggest that secular man is sacrilegious, but that he is unreligious. He views the world not in terms of some other world but in terms of itself. He feels that any meaning to be found in this world originates in this world itself. Profane man is simply this-worldly.<sup>31</sup>

Profanity is that characteristic of modern man that enables him to set about reconstructing his world -- adjusting his priorities, defining his own purposes and establishing the

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<sup>30</sup>ibid., p. 69

<sup>31</sup>ibid., p. 61





means of achieving them. The growing belief that violence is unjustifiable, that its proposal is to be opposed and by means of civil disobedience, if necessary, provides an excellent example of this characteristic. Profanity refers to the creativity of modern man.<sup>32</sup> He establishes the reality in which he lives; he imposes his forms on the formless and his patterns on the patternless. Knowledge in this sense is original with man. He orders and patterns his environment to make it meaningful and manipulative.

The secularization of knowledge is described in terms of the specialization, the innovation, the functionality and the originality of modern knowledge. It is a process which is represented geographically, socially and culturally in urbanism.

Earlier it was maintained that the dichotomy of the secular and the religious was not applicable in identifying what modern man, as Christian, intends and how he organizes his activity in fulfilling his intentions. Within this context secularized knowledge as specific and immediate in its focus and functional and original in its application, is an aspect of man's ultimate concern which is the focus of his 'religious' knowledge. It is certainly not a contradiction of that concern, nor just a preparation for it.

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<sup>32</sup>ibid., pp. 74-75.





Modern man "must grapple with the meaning of the world about which he is teaching (through his educators), and, if he does so, he is confronted by the question of the ultimate reality, God."<sup>33</sup> It is this realization that leads James Smart to conclude that "An antitheological education is an impossibility."<sup>34</sup>

The Christian living in a secularized world need not make a choice between knowing the world and knowing God. If he should choose to turn his back to either one to focus entirely on the other, he partially blinds himself. 'Doubt' and 'faith' are not two different ways of knowing, nor even successive ways of knowing. They are inextricably bound up together in human knowing. The nature of such knowing will be discussed in the next chapter; it suffices here to indicate the strong support for this conclusion in Newbigin's and Cox's respective analyses of the relationship of secularized human purpose and knowledge to Biblical religion. It is appropriate, as well, to discuss that relationship, briefly, in preparation for a discussion of the conditions of the breakdown of modern religious faith.

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<sup>33</sup>James Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 199.

<sup>34</sup>ibid., p. 199.



## Secularization and the Bible

Newbigin and Cox each present three major arguments to support the claim that secularization as a process begins with biblical theology. Newbigin's first argument is that "the roots of modern science and technology are in the biblical understanding of man and nature."<sup>35</sup> This is, in substance, the same argument that Cox makes when he writes that the Hebrew view of Creation "separates nature from God and distinguishes man from nature. This is the beginning of the disenchantment (of nature)."<sup>36</sup> Because the Hebrews understood their relationship with God to be direct and not mediated through nature, they were freed from the cosmological world-view of their neighbors and predecessors to develop a linear or historical world-view in which nature became of use to man and increasingly controlled by him. Newbigin suggests that St. Paul's understanding of responsible sonship in Christ involves an invitation to "deal boldly and confidently with the created world and all its powers ... which sets a man free to investigate, and experiment and to control."<sup>37</sup> For both scholars the desacralizing or disenchant-

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<sup>35</sup>Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man, p.30.

<sup>36</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 22.

<sup>37</sup>Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man, p.32.





ment of nature in biblical theology is a necessary precondition for modern secular science and technology. For both, as well, the process of secularization as they understand it is a logical outcome of biblical faith.

Newbigin's second argument is "that the driving power of the movement which is drawing all men into the single world civilization is a secularized form of the biblical eschatology."<sup>38</sup> This is closely related to Cox's argument that the present desacralization of politics began with the Hebrew understanding of the Exodus. Since history and not nature is the focal point of the human-divine encounter, political and social change is a matter of conscience and not a matter of fate or sorcery. The Exodus was central to the Hebrews' political perception. "It symbolized the deliverance of man out of a sacral-political order and into ... a world where political leadership would be based on power gained by the capacity to accomplish specific social objectives."<sup>39</sup> The early church carried on the process of desacralizing politics by granting only provisional worth to the state, neither totally condoning or condemning what was only temporary and incomplete. Newbigin suggests that this attitude de-

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<sup>38</sup>ibid., p. 30

<sup>39</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 26





rived from the New Testament concept of the Kingdom of God.<sup>40</sup> He suggests further that the secular faith in the possibility of achieving a physically, socially and economically better world is derived from this biblical concept, which sees God redemptively active in human affairs.

Newbigin's third argument is that "the dissolution of the 'ontocratic' pattern of society in the non-western world can be understood as a new phase in the history of the fight of prophetic religion against the total claims of a sacral society, that is, a society completely unified around a religion and a cosmology."<sup>41</sup> He argues that a permanent principle of revolution has been inherited from the secularized West by the non-western world and that it takes the form of a prophetic questioning of all established social systems. Cox argues the same point in terms of the deconsecration of values. He suggests that the Mosaic commandment against idolatry meant for the Hebrews that since God could not be duplicated by man, any effort to do so was idolatrous and any form which resulted from the effort was recognized as a human expression and therefore relative. "It was because they believed in Yahweh that, for

<sup>40</sup>Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man, p. 27

<sup>41</sup>ibid., p. 30



the Jews, all human values and their representations were relativized."<sup>42</sup> The early church's continuous struggle against idols and icons has resulted in secular man's constructive relativism. That is his ability to acknowledge the relativeness of his perception and the reality of the object of his perception.

Both scholars conclude (Newbigin does so with some precaution which will be noted later) that secularization begins with biblical theology and is a logical outgrowth of that theology. Cox asserts further that "our task should be to nourish the secularization process, to prevent it from hardening into a rigid world-view (secularism), and to clarify as often as necessary its roots in the Bible."<sup>43</sup> Anonymity, he says, represents the freeing of man from Law (bondage to the past) for Gospel (freedom for the future); that is, freedom to decide for ourselves.<sup>44</sup> Mobility represents the God of history, not of nature, active in and through human agencies of change.<sup>45</sup> Pragmatism is an expression of the Hebrew concept of truth as that which can be counted on or depended upon and of the Christian reali-

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<sup>42</sup>Cox, The Secular City, p. 32

<sup>43</sup>ibid., p. 36

<sup>44</sup>ibid., p. 46

<sup>45</sup>ibid., p. 56





zation that total and complete conceptualizations are not necessary when one's centre is Jesus Christ.<sup>46</sup> Profanity is an expression of the biblical view that man is a partner in creation; that he is the source of meaning and significance in his environment.<sup>47</sup>

Modern secular man's purposes in knowing and the nature of his knowing are continuations of the secularization process begun with the Hebrew view of man, nature and God and confirmed by the early church.

#### The Breakdown of Christian Knowing

The unitary process of knowing the world and God that has been maintained here has not been adequately developed by the contemporary Church in its educational programs. Such programs have tried to hold 'faith' (knowledge of God) and 'doubt' (knowledge of the world) as two separate and usually (not always) divergent ways of knowing. The result has been an ominous frustration and anxiety which corrodes the spirit of the Church. It is this aspect of secularization that causes Bishop Newbigin to be cautious. Further, a dysfunction has developed in Christian education due to the lack of

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<sup>46</sup>ibid., pp. 65ff

<sup>47</sup>ibid., pp. 73-74.





adequately relating the task of education to the task of theology. James Smart recognized this lack of relationship as the major cause of the great confusion and indifference on the part of church members with regard to the mission of the Church in the world. Finally, a stagnation of faith has resulted from its being understood as an unrelated, fully achievable state of one part of the human personality. Gerald Slusser implies that this carry-over from the Middle Ages has forced modern Christians to turn away from either the world or God.

A brief examination of each of these positions, considered in light of the relationship of secularization and the Bible, will focus attention on one major aspect of the task of Christian education in the modern world.

Newbigin is concerned with the tendency of modern man to fail to see the relationship between secularization and its biblical source. He foresees three major outcomes of this failure -- mental slavery, totalitarianism and self-destructive nihilism. The first outcome will result from failing to see man's increased mastery over his environment, given him through secularization, in relationship to his responsibility to God.

Questions about personal destiny, about the meaning and purpose of human life, will always be asked,....  
If there is no doctrine of divine providence then



the vacuum will be filled by some kind of belief in luck, fate, or in the stars.<sup>48</sup>

The second outcome will result from the failure to inform the drive for a new and common world society of the nature of the Kingdom of God.

Will a society which takes this goal of development (a new order within history) seriously not find itself ineluctably driven towards some sort of ideology as the only means of evoking the necessary sacrifices, and will not every such ideology involve eventually a process of dehumanization?<sup>49</sup>

The third outcome will result from the failure to direct the secular protest against things as they are by knowledge of God.

The negation will become self-destructive if it does not rest upon an affirmation which is, for the moment, not questioned. The inexhaustible power of the prophetic spirit in the tradition of biblical faith was derived from the affirmation of the reality and power and holiness of God..."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man, p. 39

<sup>49</sup>ibid., p. 35

<sup>50</sup>ibid., p. 38





The attempt to hold 'doubt' and 'faith' as separate and unrelated ways of knowing results in frustration and anxiety (e.g., belief in fate, dehumanization, and self-destruction). Newbigin concludes that accepting the relationship of secularization to biblical faith lays on Christians the great responsibility of maintaining that relationship.<sup>51</sup> More specifically, it lays upon Christian educators the responsibility of maintaining the continuous interaction of 'doubt' and 'faith' in the development of intelligent thought on the part of their students.

Smart defines theology generally as that discipline of the Church "taking with complete seriousness the question of its own existence and inquiring with the utmost thoroughness at what points it is failing to be the Church of God."<sup>52</sup> The terms "existence" and "to be" imply Smart's earlier assertion of the place of the Church in the world. The Church "in order to be the servant of God's revelation to men, has to remain in the world ("existence"), intimately involved ("to be") in man's life in every age."<sup>53</sup> One aspect of the task of Christian education as "the educational agency in the service of the Word" is to bring the insights of secular educational theory to its task. A second aspect of its task

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<sup>51</sup>ibid., pp. 41-42

<sup>52</sup>Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, p. 33

<sup>53</sup>ibid., p. 32



is to bring the insights of the discipline of theology to bear on the educational endeavor.<sup>54</sup> The Church at work educating its members, then, is continually relating secular education (as the discipline which takes as its main object of study the way of knowing)<sup>55</sup> and theology (as the discipline which takes as its main object of study the relationship of knowledge of God and knowledge of the world).<sup>56</sup> Christian education, then, must always be intimately related to the discipline of theology (and all its departments, of which Christian education is itself one).<sup>57</sup>

Christian education in the past half-century, however, actually became divorced from theology to the point that, though sometimes educationally sound, it was usually theologically unsound -- at best confused and at worst unconcerned. "... because Christian educators have failed to be critical theologians, the Church has lacked a department of theology that would help it, in its educational activities, to escape from false or confused theologies into a

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<sup>54</sup>ibid., pp. 41-42

<sup>55</sup>Note that this understanding of education is the subject of Chapter Three.

<sup>56</sup>This definition of theology is based on the examination of Smart's definition of theology in the context of the Church, found immediately above.

<sup>57</sup>It follows, as well, that Christian education must be intimately related to the discipline of education. These relationships will be discussed in Chapter Four.





true theology."<sup>58</sup> The failure did not simply result in a lack of theologians but in a confused and indifferent Church membership.<sup>59</sup> This creates an impossible situation for the Christian who seeks to relate clearly and meaningfully the world about him with his faith. It falls short of what the situation of the Christian should be according to Smart:

The Christian disciple is an intensive student of modern man, using everything that comes his way for his purpose, but having his basic understanding from what he knows of himself in the light that shines into the depths of his life from God's Word.<sup>60</sup>

Slusser defines faith as the central "organizing principle of human personality."<sup>61</sup> Faith is not purely an intellectual act, but it does include the intellect. It is not simply an emotional affair, but it does involve emotions. Neither is it a matter of will entirely, but it does involve determination. Unfortunately, the medieval understanding of faith as a matter of believing the Church, of holding the Church's doctrines with or without understanding, of passively receiving grace, as substance, through

<sup>58</sup>ibid., p. 67

<sup>59</sup>ibid., pp. 68-80

<sup>60</sup>ibid., p. 130

<sup>61</sup>Gerald H. Slusser, The Local Church In Transition, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 97





the medium of the sacrament, and of doing good works and worship, has resulted in the present confusion of faith as doctrinal adherence, or as an uncritical emotion, or as moral obedience.<sup>62</sup> In the first case, "believing the right things" enables one to gain security and God's side in an uncertain environment and to escape the doubt so characteristic of the world.<sup>63</sup> In the second case, making a purely emotional commitment enables one to gain "an emotional sense of well-being that is totally unrelated to faith". It enables one to adjust comfortably to the world about him without any adequate sense of his relationship to God.<sup>64</sup> In the third case, moral obedience forces the Christian to choose for God or for the world. Legalism (devotion to the law) results in a removal of oneself from the world to be nearer God. "Do-goodism" (devotion to obedience to the law) results in character education which is simply an adjustment to the world.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>ibid., pp. 86-89

<sup>63</sup>ibid., pp. 89-92. Slusser suggests, in asserting that faith understood as believing the right things is a kind of knowledge, that it is knowledge in the scientific or historical sense. This is a poor identification to make and one of the purposes of this thesis is to examine the nature of scientific or historical or whatever kind of knowledge. What Slusser is referring to is a form of uncritical, rote knowledge which, if held outside of any truly meaningful context, is in itself meaningless.

<sup>64</sup>ibid., pp. 92-94

<sup>65</sup>ibid., pp. 94-96



Faith, as defined by Slusser, is the organizing principle of one's personality. It is "that around which human personality finds it possible to be," and is so essential to being that "anyone who lives, lives by faith." Faith as such is expressed in an understanding of life centered in some object to which the personality, as a whole, relates.<sup>66</sup> Christian faith is dynamically centered on "the final power beyond the creation" which is God. As such it "includes the courage to live, to be, even when doubt is present; it encompasses the ability to tolerate the risk and uncertainty and insecurity that are involved in living by faith and not by sight."<sup>67</sup> The function of Christian education, then, is generally to encourage the life of faith in God "through intellectual, affective, and conative teaching and learning."<sup>68</sup>

In summary it may be said that a major part of the task of Christian educators is to understand fully and to impart adequately Christianity as a way of knowing (in which 'faith' and 'doubt' are held together inextricably) the world and God in vital relationship, such that Christian commitment does not corrode or function only partially or

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<sup>66</sup>ibid., pp. 97-105

<sup>67</sup>ibid., p. 108

<sup>68</sup>ibid., p. 185





stagnate when the Christian experiences the full impact of either the secular world or the will of God. The nature of knowing critically is not particular to 'doubt' or 'faith'. It is not one thing for the scientist or the historian and quite another thing for the Christian as Christian. It is peculiar to man, certainly to secular man, whether he be meaningfully committed to Christ or not.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NATURE OF KNOWING

#### The Basic Epistemology

In speaking of "one way of knowing" or of "the unitary process of knowing" as in the previous chapter there is no intent to imply that rote or intuition or experience or reason or revelation are not all adequate means of gaining understanding. Speaking of "the way of knowing" implies that man characteristically relates and organizes what is gained in understanding in a particular way. Man integrates all particular 'bits' of information, gained by whatever means, through a continuous and consistent process of critically relating data, ideas and phenomena. It is a process in which man himself is an integral and intelligent participant, and by which he grows in understanding. This process is called 'knowing'.<sup>1</sup> To describe it is to describe man -- secular man, biblical man, Christian man -- as he relates to his total environment. In describing this process

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<sup>1</sup>In later sections of this chapter reference will be made to "ways of knowing". What is intended by the use of the plural form of "way" in speaking of "knowing" is a differentiation between basic assumptions or points of view in 'knowing'.



of relationship there need be no complete delimitation of, and no limitation placed upon the character either of man or of the environment to which he relates -- and more is intended in the following description.

In Chapter One four characteristics of knowledge were inferred from Cox's description of the "shape" and "style" of technopolis. They are: specialization, innovation, functionality and originality.<sup>2</sup> These characteristics were seen to correspond generally with descriptions of secularized knowledge in works by Crysdale, Tillich and Nowbigin. Knowledge as such was subsequently seen, in an examination of arguments presented by Cox and Nowbigin, to be continuous with and to be a reasonable outcome of certain central aspects of biblical theology. The description of knowledge presented by the above mentioned scholars is, not surprisingly, characteristic of a particular philosophical position that has greatly influenced Western (particularly North American) culture in the last half century. This philosophical position has been described, within secular educational theory, as pragmatic, instrumental, experimental. What is of interest here is not a particular

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<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 16-21





philosophical "school"<sup>3</sup>, but the characterization of knowledge basic to that school. This characterization was and still is best stated by John Dewey:

For the creation of democratic society we need an educational system where the process of moral - intellectual development is in practice as well as in theory a co-operative transaction of inquiry engaged in by free, independent human beings who treat ideas and the heritage of the past as means and methods for the further enrichments of life, quantitatively and qualitatively, who use the good attained for the discovery and establishment of something better.<sup>4</sup>

As the above statement indicates, Dewey was as much a social reformer as a student of the way man knows. The basic moti-

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<sup>3</sup>Like many philosophical systems, pragmatism or instrumentalism or experimentalism has created its own limitations which are well recorded in the excesses and superficialities of "progressive education". For written record one may read: J.S.Brubacher, "A Proposal For Judging What Is and What Is Not Progressive Education", School and Society, 48 (October 22, 1938) 509-19; L.A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961); and "John Dewey and the Progressive - Education Movement, 1915-1952", School Review, 67 (Summer, 1959), 160-173; and John Dewey, Experience and Education, (New York: Collier Books, 1963).

<sup>4</sup>This statement was written by John Dewey in his introductory essay to The Use of Resources In Education by E.E. Clapp, and is quoted by L.A. Cremin in his paper, "John Dewey and the Progressive Education Movement, 1915-1952", p. 171. Cremin suggests that this statement embodies the essence of progressive education as Dewey saw it.



vation underlying his philosophical position and consequently his deep concern for education was the desire for a new social order. He was not, however, a dogmatist and his description of the way men know can stand apart and be examined without allusion to or acceptance of his particular social philosophy.

Two general characteristics of human knowing which are representative of the understanding of pragmatism are presented in the above statement. First, that man is continuous with his environment in the sense that he treats "ideas and the heritage of the past as means and methods for the further enrichments of life", and is a creative force in the growth of his relationship with that environment in the sense that he uses "the good attained for the discovery and establishment of something better". Second, that the method of intelligent inquiry as "co-operative transaction" is man's means of directing his growth as a "free, independent" agent. To say that man is continuous with his environment in this sense is much the same as saying that his cumulative knowledge functions to create new understanding of new problems. And to say that man is a creative force in this sense is to say that his knowledge is innovative, that it serves to extend his understanding and his ability to control and manipulate his environment. Further, to describe inquiry as co-operative transaction is to refer





to the inventiveness and directedness of specialized knowledge; and to describe man as freely directing his growth is to describe human knowledge as original.

The point being made is that the understanding of human knowing of which Dewey is representative is basically the same as that which has otherwise been described as secular and urban, and which is derived from a biblical understanding of man in relation to nature and God. The above connections can be clarified by an examination of the way of knowing described by that philosophical understanding of which Dewey is representative.

Four factors of the way of knowing critically can be delineated. These will later be clarified in an examination of the way children 'learn' and of the way that scholars 'know'. Firstly, knowing is relating. All man's knowledge is a complex of relationships. It is in this sense, again, that man is said to be continuous with his environment, and in which knowledge is said to be relative, and in which relativity in knowing is said to be crucial. The act of relating or the character of relativity is crucial not because it supports a particular world-view, or a particular philosophical system, but because it appears to be the critical factor in man's knowing. E.E. Bayles expresses this justification in the following way;



... the relationalistic (or relativistic) orientation seems more basic or inclusive than assumptions regarding the nature of truth and how to obtain it. For epistemology is only one of the three basic philosophical categories, whereas being relativistic (or relationistic) rather than absolutistic applies to axiology and to ontology as well.<sup>5</sup>

Nothing exists independently of other things; nothing is known in isolation from the knower; and no independent external is known to impose itself upon reality. What is known is related to -- is relative to -- the knower. No metaphysical scheme can arbitrarily impose order or pattern onto existence -- understood as man in relation to environment -- because it is continually in danger of being refuted. As it is, its prescriptions appear more and more as imposition. In fact, where a pattern or ordering seems to emerge or where occurrences become predictable a generalization, or a law, or a truth, may be stated and relied upon for the moment and applied in a new situation. Since such laws or truths derive from human exper-

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<sup>5</sup>E.E. Bayles, Pragmatism In Education, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 4. Bayles' general purpose is to show that the pragmatists' understanding of knowledge is not based on prior or absolutistic assumptions of the nature of truth. It is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It is an understanding of what seems to occur in human knowing; and as such it is as much an expression of the nature of existence and of the nature of values as it is of the nature of truth.





ience they "describe, they do not prescribe" human experience in relationship to environment.<sup>6</sup> So long as such generalizations are functional in that relationship, that is so long as they enable man to relate meaningfully with his environment and to extend his understanding of that relation, they are held to be valid.

Secondly, knowing is creating. It is the process of continually reorganizing experience and reconstructing knowledge -- it is growth, "the cumulative movement of action toward a later result".<sup>7</sup> Since change is seen by man to be unlimited, and as such it is "the basic and primary reality,"<sup>8</sup> man continually strives for growth in his understanding. His knowing progresses as he creates and invents new patterns and new order in his relationship to his physical, social and cultural environment. Progress in this sense "becomes contingent on man", upon his situations, his needs and his choices.<sup>9</sup> Knowing is the activity of innovating

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<sup>6</sup>J.L. Childs, American Pragmatism and Education, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1956), p. 62.

<sup>7</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 41.

<sup>8</sup>J.S. Brubacher, "Darwinian Evolution and Deweyan Education", Rhode Island College Journal, 1 (December, 1960) p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>L.G. Thomas, "The Meaning of Progress in Progressive Education", Educational Administration and Supervision, 32 (October, 1946), p. 388.





new forms and new patterns of relationship which enables man to increase his controlling and manipulative power. Knowing is "an active co-operation between knower and the known, in which manipulation, change, and control take the place of ... mere looking".<sup>10</sup> This new ordering represents an expanded knowledge of the environment and onself within it and creates an expanded area of experience. "Life-space" as Dewey asserted, "and life-durations are expanded."<sup>11</sup>

Thirdly, knowing is experiencing. It is the trying of hypotheses and the undergoing of consequences.<sup>12</sup> Acts of knowing do not take place exclusively within the mind of the knower; "they originate, they are sustained, and they terminate in relations of the living creature with environmental conditions".<sup>13</sup> Through a fluid, dynamic experiencing of his environment the individual learns and grows. Dewey calls this factor co-operative transaction, as noted earlier.<sup>14</sup> It is characterized by that method

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<sup>10</sup>G.R. Geiger, "An Experimentalist Approach to Education," Modern Philosophies and Education, Fifty-fourth Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 140.

<sup>11</sup>Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 139-144.

<sup>13</sup>Childs, American Pragmatism and Education, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup>See above, p. 38.



variously called reflective thinking, scientific method, and critical inquiry, which as the method of the scientist is the "method of intelligent learning".<sup>15</sup> It is the method by which alone science is science because it is the method "by which the subject matter of our ordinary activities is transmitted into scientific form".<sup>16</sup>

Dewey outlines five general features of the method of inquiry.

They are (I) perplexity, confusion, doubt, due to the fact that one is implicated in an incomplete situation whose full character is not yet determined; (II) a conjectural anticipation -- a tentative interpretation of the given elements, attributing to them a tendency to effect certain consequences; (III) a careful survey (examination, inspection, exploration, analysis) of all attainable consideration which will define and clarify the problem in hand; (IV) a consequent elaboration of the tentative hypothesis to make it more precise and more consistent, because squaring with a wider range of facts; (V) taking one stand upon the projected hypothesis as a plan of action which is applied to the existing state of affairs: doing something overtly to bring about the anticipated

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<sup>15</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup>ibid., p. 221.





result, and thereby testing the hypothesis.<sup>17</sup>

In order for inquiry to be intelligent or reflective or critical certain attitudes must prevail. These are: a direct involvement in the resolution of the problematic situation; an openness of mind that receives all considerations and that leads to an expansion of horizon; a unity of purpose or completeness of interest in the problematic situation and its progression; and finally, an acceptance, on the part of the inquirer, of the consequences of his hypothesis, "acknowledging them in action" and "seeing a thing through".<sup>18</sup> Knowing as critical inquiry, then, utilizes doubt, takes pluralism seriously, is directed to a particular end-in-view, meaningfully involves the inquirer in the risk of uncertainty, and yet requires of him a certain impartiality such that the implications of inquiry go beyond the inquirer, are made known, and become the means for further inquiry.<sup>19</sup>

Fourthly, knowing is valuing. Validation arises out of human experience generally, and the acceptance

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<sup>17</sup>ibid., p. 150.

<sup>18</sup>ibid., pp. 173-179.

<sup>19</sup>ibid., pp. 145-150.



of the consequences of experience specifically. Values are instrumental in the sense that what serves to extend man's relationship with his environment, to make it more meaningful, is valued. What makes desired things desirable or worthy, then, is the quality of their relationship to other things.<sup>20</sup> Values are original with man in that they arise out of his experiences of the consequences of hypotheses.<sup>21</sup> They are contextual in the sense that they are expressions of human interests and aims in the process of transaction. The context is one in which the known and the act of knowing are one process, continuous and progressive. Dewey and Bentley define transaction in terms of circularity; world - being - known - to - man - in - it. Inquiry in this context runs in two directions -- that is, knowing and being known occur in the same process.<sup>22</sup> As man extends his knowledge, he extends himself -- as he knows, he is known. The direction, the character of his knowing is the expression of his values. Consequently, "if values are the results of human choices made in a transaction involving the live creature and its environment,

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<sup>20</sup>Brubacher, "A Proposal For Judging", pp. 509-519.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas, "The Meaning of Progress", p. 396.

<sup>22</sup>J. Dewey and A.F. Bentley, Knowing and the Known (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960) p. 104.





then their character must be found in that context."<sup>23</sup>

The way of knowing basic to man as man is a process of transaction involving the known and the knower in a continuously developing relationship (knowledge is functional), in which understanding is provisional and cumulative (knowledge is innovative), in which meaningful experience is directed and consequential (knowledge is specialized), and in which values are original and contextual (knowledge is original with man).

### Cognitive Structuring

Dewey's distinction between the logical and the psychological organization of knowledge is the basis of his concept of education and is derived directly from his understanding of the way of knowing. Jerome Bruner has made the same understanding the basis of his concept of the structure of knowledge. This concept has received such wide acceptance that it is now the basis of many new curricula and is, for example, the basic point of view of the new Social Studies, Language, Mathematics and Chemistry curricula authorized by the Alberta Department of Education.

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<sup>23</sup>Geiger, "An Experimentalist Approach", p. 145.





Dewey distinguishes between the disciplined scholar's organization of knowledge and the beginning learner's organization of knowledge in the following way. For the scholar subject matter is "extensive, accurately defined, and logically interrelated."<sup>24</sup> It is accumulated, ascertained knowledge held to be true for the moment and which serves as information or data in the ongoing process of scientific inquiry. It is "that which we think with rather than that which we think about"; "a kind of bridge for mind (as the process of thinking) in its passage from doubt to discovery".<sup>25</sup> To be of use in this way knowledge must be organized or systematized rationally or logically. But it can only be of use when one is ready to use it; "experience makes us aware that there is a difference between intellectual certainty of subject matter and our certainty".<sup>26</sup> That is, knowledge as information logically organized cannot be intelligently acquisitioned per se. Knowledge that is entirely known memoriter is verbal or thoughtless.

Logically organized knowledge -- scientific knowledge -- is vital to learning; but the child does not 'learn' it by rote, rather he 'learns' it by using it in

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<sup>24</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 184.

<sup>25</sup>ibid., p. 188.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., p. 188.



the same way that he learns the method of thoughtful inquiry --- chronologically or psychologically.

The chronological method which begins with the experience of the learner and develops from that the proper modes of scientific treatment is often called the "psychological" method in distinction from the logical method of the expert or specialist. The apparent loss of time involved is more than made up for by the superior understanding and vital interest secured. What the pupil learns he at least understands.<sup>27</sup>

The psychological organization of knowledge is experiential. Through dealing with selected problematic situations of his acquaintance by thoughtful inquiry, the child is enabled to develop his understanding of relationships, his ability to use the method of inquiry, and eventually to contribute significantly to human understanding. The validity of this understanding of learning lies in the fact that it is the method by which scholars have reached their perfected, logically organized knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>ibid., pp. 220-221.

<sup>28</sup>ibid., p. 221.





Thinking is thus equivalent to an explicit rendering of the intelligent element in our experience. It makes it possible to act with an end in view. It is the condition of our having aims. As soon as an infant begins to expect he begins to use something which is now going on as a sign of something to follow; he is, in however simple a fashion, judging. For he takes one thing as evidence of something else, and recognizes a relationship. Any future development, however elaborate it may be, is only an extending and a refining of this simple act of inference. All that the wisest man can do is to observe what is going on more widely and more minutely and then select more carefully from what is noted just these factors which point to something to happen.<sup>29</sup>

Bruner's concept of the structure of knowledge is based on this understanding of learning; but is an attempt to develop the understanding much further. The act of learning involves three simultaneous processes for Bruner:

... Acquisition of new information -- often information that runs counter to or is a replacement for what the person has previously known ... it is a refinement of previous knowledge.

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<sup>29</sup>ibid., p. 146.



... transformation -- the process of manipulating knowledge to make it fit new tasks .... that permits extrapolation or interpolation or conversion into another form .... the ways we deal with information in order to go beyond it.

... evaluation: checking whether the way we have manipulated information is adequate to the task. Is the generalization fitting, have we extrapolated appropriately, are we operating properly?<sup>30</sup>

These processes obviously comprise another statement of the way of knowing as Dewey described it. Bruner, however, distinguishes more clearly than Dewey the criteria for the development of thought. Representation is the first process of learning outlined by Bruner -- the acquiring of meaningful information.<sup>31</sup> It is "how the child gets free of present stimuli and conserves past experience in a model, and the rules that govern storage and retrieval of information from this model"; in short, the translation of experience into the individual's model of the world. Bruner delineates three ways in which this is achieved -- through action (the enactive mode of representation), through visual or

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<sup>30</sup>J. Bruner, The Process of Education, (New York: Vintage Books, Random House Inc., 1960), pp. 48-49.

<sup>31</sup>See above, p. 50.





other sensory organization (the iconic mode of representation), and through words and language (the symbolic mode of representation).<sup>32</sup>

The three modes of representing the world develop in a particular order until the individual can use all three. They are not three stages of knowing in the sense that they replace each other. They become parallel ways of acquiring information and of using it. Bruner describes the development as one of "spurts and rests".<sup>33</sup> The spurts are the most active periods of acquiring the abilities characteristic of growth -- manipulation, internal representation and reflective thought. Each period is characterized by acquired tool-using skills that reflect the evolution of the human nervous system as "something that required outside devices for expressing its potential"<sup>34</sup> -- time and strength-saving skills for using our muscles, attention-saving skills in perception and strain-reducing conceptualizations to help us figure out things.

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<sup>32</sup>Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 10.

<sup>33</sup>ibid., p. 27.

<sup>34</sup>ibid., p. 25.





In the end, the mature organism seems to have gone through a process of elaborating three systems of skills that correspond to the three major tool systems to which he must link himself for full expression of his capacities -- tools for the hand, for the distance receptors, and for the process of reflection.<sup>35</sup>

It is these systems of skills that enable the individual to acquire information.

In the enactive mode, the infant child knows in terms of his own actions upon concrete objects and consequently in terms of purely physical relationships between himself and objects. However, "the cycle of learning begins ... with particulars and immediately moves toward abstraction."<sup>36</sup> In the iconic mode, the preschooler begins to abstract by summarizing experiences into images, mainly visual and auditory. Through organizing perceptual images which are of the concrete and the specific in his environment the child is able to remember them and consequently to use them in filling in his model of the world. He is, however, tied to sensory imagery and to an understanding of it based on any one controlling feature of a

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<sup>35</sup>ibid., p. 28.

<sup>36</sup>J. Bruner, On Knowing, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 123.



situation. "He can copy but not transpose"; he is able to reproduce an image only as he coded it, but he cannot transform it into a new pattern.<sup>37</sup> In the symbolic mode, the school-aged child begins to use language to meaningfully abstract and generalize objects and events. The compactability of language enables the individual to store a great deal of information and to apply himself to several demands concurrently. At this point language is internalized and becomes truly representative of reflective thinking. That is, language ceases to be only a means of relating to the environment and becomes a relating of environment.<sup>38</sup>

Categorization is the second process of learning outlined by Bruner.<sup>39</sup> It is the means of transforming information and of going beyond it. It is the grouping of objects, events and people into classes or groups which man invents for this purpose on the basis of common characteristics.<sup>40</sup> The purpose of categorization is "to cut down the diversity of objects and events that must be dealt with uniquely by an organism of limited capacities and ... it

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<sup>37</sup>Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup>ibid., pp. 104-109.

<sup>39</sup>See above, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup>J. Bruner, J.J. Goodnow, G.A. Austin: A Study of Thinking, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1961) pp.231-232.





makes possible the sorting of functionally significant groupings in the world".<sup>41</sup> Through the development of the iconic and symbolic modes of knowing the child learns to categorize sensory input and later symbolic information on the basis of rules of equivalence -- "that things may be considered alike because all of them exhibit a common characteristic."<sup>42</sup> On the basis of criterial attributes of a thing, person, event, or concept there is a selective placing of it in one category or another. Categorization on the perceptual level -- the identification of stimuli -- is continuous with categorization on the conceptual level -- the identification of abstractions. The internalization of language at about age seven, however, marks a shift from using exclusively perceptual categorization to using mainly conceptual categorization.

Conceptual categorization is vital to critical thinking. It enables the individual to organize and simplify the complexities of his environment; to identify, readily, elements in his environment; to store acquired information and consequently reduce the anxiety and frustration of constant learning; to reflect rationally on new input, and develop

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<sup>41</sup>ibid., p. 245.

<sup>42</sup>Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, p. 17.



more competent understanding; and to infer new connections, to anticipate new classes of equivalence and to group his categories into generic codes or models.<sup>43</sup>

Codification is the means of evaluating the adequacy of representation and categorization. It is the third process of learning outlined by Bruner.<sup>44</sup> It is the establishment of "a set of contingently related, nonspecific categories" that permits a new and more general reconstruction of material.<sup>45</sup> In this sense it is theory-building --- the abstraction of critical characteristics from particular categories and the relating of them for the purpose of gaining a wider view and a deeper understanding of new information.<sup>46</sup> Codification serves this purpose by the systematization of knowledge into models "that we construct to give meaning and structure to regularities in experience."<sup>47</sup> The code or theory or model provides a framework within which one may examine the appropriateness of his inquiry and categorizing and on which one may build and extend his understanding.

<sup>43</sup>Bruner, et al, A Study of Thinking, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup>See above, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup>Bruner, "Going Beyond the Information Given", Cognition: The Colorado Symposium, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 46.

<sup>46</sup>ibid., p. 63.

<sup>47</sup>Bruner, On Knowing, p. 120.





Codification represents the highly organized knowledge characteristic of the academic disciplines. Instruction, Bruner concludes, must take account of the 'readiness' of the student (his level of intellectual development) and the structure of the subject matter (the nature of its codification). Bruner's argument is that to transmit the "facts" of physics or of history is not to teach physics or history. Instruction in a subject matter must involve its reduction to basic principles and organizing ideas -- the externalization of the processes of categorization and codification.<sup>48</sup>

Bruner has analyzed in detail what Dewey described generally --- the relationship between the basic way of knowing intelligently characteristic of man and clarified in the way children 'learn' and the way that a scientist or a historian 'knows'. The major difference between learning (knowing as a beginner knows) and critical inquiry (knowing as a scholar knows) is the development of a high degree of abstraction and systematization in the latter --- that is, theoretical codification for Bruner and logical organization for Dewey. In short, the beginner 'learns' within the framework of, and on the basis of, his experiences mainly and the scholar 'knows' within the framework

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<sup>48</sup>Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, pp.41-48.





of and on the basis of his theory mainly. The task of instruction is to structure the subject matter such that the beginner is able to advance in understanding and mastery to the level of the scholar. The purpose in performing this task is to facilitate the continual reconstruction and expansion of man's understanding of himself in relationship to his total environment. Before examining this focus of education, it is necessary to clarify the role of theory in knowing and the concept of models as ways of knowing.

### The Role of Theory

The way of knowing has been seen as learning in the sense that a child learns. It remains now to examine more carefully the way of knowing of the scholar. This examination confirms the idea being developed that there is a similarity between the way a scholar thinks and the way a student learns. Scholarly knowing will be examined in terms of: the role of theory in knowing; models as ways of knowing; and the criteria of disciplined inquiry.

The major difference between the way of knowing of the beginner and the way of knowing of the scholar is the high level of abstraction and systemization achieved by scholarly endeavor. As indicated earlier, Bruner described the process of achieving abstraction and organization as



theory-building or codification.<sup>49</sup> Theory-building is the process of summarizing and relating extensive and diverse categories of knowledge for a more directed and more generative examination of the environment. It is the process of constructing a theoretical framework into which unrelated data can be put into new patterns; on the basis of which new hypothesis and predictions may be made; and by which hypotheses may be evaluated as adequate or inadequate for understanding.<sup>50</sup>

Theory as framework can be understood as analytic thinking; that is, as both deductive reasoning using logical form and inductive reasoning using experimental form to extend understanding.<sup>51</sup> Theory as process involves both analytic and intuitive thinking. The former is mediated thought, carried forward in rational and experimental form, and the latter is immediate -- the "act of grasping the meaning, significance, or structure of a problem or situation without explicit reliance on the analytic apparatus."<sup>52</sup> Theory as process can be characterized as

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<sup>49</sup>See above, p. 56.

<sup>50</sup>Bruner, "Going Beyond the Information Given", pp. 57-58.

<sup>51</sup>Bruner, The Process of Education, pp. 57-78.

<sup>52</sup>ibid., p. 60.





discovery -- "the rearranging or transforming (of) evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to additional new insights."<sup>53</sup> Theory as evaluation is the continual relating of process to framework--the relating of successive ideas and patterns to prior ones. It is the making of connections, the feeling backward and forward of patterns so that framework and process are continuous and interdependent, and so that understanding is always adequate for its own growth. Bruner, in speaking of the reciprocity of learning in a complex culture, concludes that "Knowing in this sense is like a rope, each strand of which extends no more than a few inches along its length, all being intertwined to give a solidity to the whole."<sup>54</sup> Evaluation is the act of adequately intertwining, so that what is held on the one hand and what is beheld on the other are made continuous. Theory, then, is similar in function to the child's view or model of the world.<sup>55</sup> It differs from such a world view in its abstraction and its logical organization. Theory enables the inquirer to achieve greater directedness and generativeness in knowing.

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<sup>53</sup>Bruner, "The Act of Discovery", in Human Learning in the School, ed. by John P. De Cecco (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 258.

<sup>54</sup>Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, p. 126.

<sup>55</sup>See Above, p. 51.



Theory is seen by Dewey as the means for achieving controlled inquiry: "The methods of science .... are nothing but experimentation carried out under conditions of deliberate control." Controlling inquiry means setting an aim to which inquiry is directed, and establishing measures and methods by which inquiry is conducted.<sup>56</sup> The need for control is the reason for developing theory. A theory embodies the statement of aims, the definition of measures, and the prescription of methods to be used in inquiry and by which results may be evaluated.

Marc Belth in his study of education as a formal discipline summarized the role of theory in the assertion that theory provides the context of knowing. "We must see the relationship of a statement made to the theories from which it derives and to the models by means of which it is interpreted."<sup>57</sup> A theory, according to Belth, is a set of postulates (basic assumptions and underlying hypotheses which are the ground of a particular inquiry) from which inferences can be made. It functions to provide: a meaningful context for inquiry; the rules "which create a correspondence between the terms of the theory and the events

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<sup>56</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 272-273.

<sup>57</sup>Marc Belth, Education As A Discipline, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965), p. 26.





upon which they are to be used"; and the interpretation of events which allows for further inquiry. Belth expresses the crucial role of theory in knowing when he says that theory and not nature (which is often supposed) accounts for:

... the systematic relationship of an event described, the way in which it is described, the models in terms of which it is described and the context within which the described observations take place.

He says further that,

the theory which binds together these elements also makes possible an explanation, or an account of the total event. From such explanations there develops opportunity for making inferences, which could not otherwise take place.<sup>58</sup>

Inference-making for Belth is of primary importance in an open-ended theory. It is the power to make new connections in knowledge, "the activity of discovering what is not present from an examination of what is present," within the theoretical framework. It precedes test or experiment

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<sup>58</sup>ibid., p. 30.





and is "a contemplation of a theory which we hold and what is entailed in it."<sup>59</sup> Belth broadly describes the operation of inferring as follows:

From the conserving source of memory, or from one or more of its alternatives such as written records, recordings, symbols, and tokens, materials are collected. These materials include matters of knowledge, belief, or even images preserved without having been sorted out or labeled. By immediate inspection, or retrospection, they are identified as having some similarity to the materials confronted in an immediate problem. A passing visual image seems somehow to make its imprint on memory. It remains in some unaccountable way until much later, when another event is identified with it. And from this new event, it derives a meaning not previously ascribed to it.<sup>60</sup>

If the conditions for inference-making, as described by Belth, are highly ordered and the elements abstracted and controlled then inference-making is recognized as hypothesizing at a scholarly level. However, theory, as understood by Belth is more than a hypothesis. It is the basis for hypothesizing. "It is the context plus the deductions made possible

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<sup>59</sup>ibid., pp. 93-94.

<sup>60</sup>ibid., pp. 95-96.



by the relationships which the context establishes, and plus a set of rules for making valid deductions from a given present to a future."<sup>61</sup> Theory provides for deduction or description or explanation but is in itself none of these. It is a basic point of view, the recognition of a possibility, the acceptance of an "as if" which itself cannot be observed.

Theory is the basis of scholarly knowing. It is the major difference between knowing as the scholar knows and knowing as the beginner knows (whose basis of knowing is more direct experience). There is a continuity in the bases in the sense that theory is an ordering of experience raised to a high level of abstraction. However, as such, it facilitates a wider view and a sharper focus in knowing.

#### Models As Ways of Knowing.

Theory is expressed in models of knowing. Models are the observable forms of theories.<sup>62</sup> A model is a representation of theory which may be used to order new events, and to explain those events to others. It is "every man's procedure for understanding himself and the world ..."  
Further,

it is by the same means that man communicates to

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<sup>61</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 32.

<sup>62</sup>ibid., p. 31.





others what he expects of them, and shapes them into the forms of character and ability he wants them to have.

Man is constantly inventing models to shape his world and to shape the personality of others. In doing so:

(he) borrows from everywhere -- from his observations, from what he has felt and tasted, from his dreams and illusions, from his desires and dreads. After a time, it becomes all but impossible to disentangle the observed from the dreamed or the invented. But these elements together, in the forms which they have, make up a system which determines man's powers of observation and understanding. What he sees in the world is what his systematic cluster permits him to see. The meanings which events come to have derive entirely from this system, the model of reality through which he sees the world.

Models, as understood by Belth, may take the form of philosophies, theologies, or simply of a word or a picture, or a function. However they are formed,

They are windows through which we see the world meaningful to us in their own terms. No man ever sees the world other than through some conceptual system, whether he is aware of this or not. Thus, whatever man studies, he is in fact studying some



aspect of reality as it is revealed in and through the theoretical model he uses.<sup>63</sup>

Belth suggests four basic types of models.<sup>64</sup> The first are scale models which reproduce the features of an event for closer study and manipulation. The second is the analogue model which reproduces the structure of relationships in an event so that hypotheses may be developed to explain the whole structure. The third is the mathematical model which represents the structure of relationships in an event so that inferences can be made concerning the relationships of parts within the structure. The fourth is the theoretical model which takes account of known facts derived from a previous model to explain a new event or situation. "We invoke a theory -- that is, propound a system which we cannot observe, which explains what we see." The theory is put into model form by taking "some comparable but unproblematic and well-organized domain, establish rules of correlation between it and the troublesome domain we are confronting, and, with these rules, translate the inferences made in the known domain into the domain which has puzzled

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<sup>63</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, pp. 60-61.

<sup>64</sup>ibid., pp. 87-90.





us,"<sup>65</sup> This procedure is a highly abstracted and controlled exercise of the basic way of knowing described earlier in this chapter. All models, of whatever type, consciously or unconsciously developed, serve as the grounds for understanding, for describing the world. Theoretical models, mainly, undergird the endeavors of the academic disciplines. They are "constructions or inventions which serve to measure, guide, explain, and interpret the features and meanings of the activities clustered into specific disciplines."<sup>66</sup>

Belth describes several forms of theoretical models.<sup>67</sup> The first is the mythic model. A believable explanation of the ground of all that is known is given as true and unquestionable. Belth points out that all theoretical models accept some primary base which cannot be observed and is therefore to be accepted as given. What is distinctive about models in this regard is the degree to which they "motivate

<sup>65</sup>ibid., pp. 87-89

<sup>66</sup>ibid., pp. 179- 80.

<sup>67</sup>ibid., pp. 179-184. It is important to note that Belth does not suggest that his study includes an examination of all the forms or manifestations of models. "Men continually invent models in order to propound better explanations and richer interpretations." (p.84) What is important is the examination of those characteristic models that bear significantly on the study of education. The important issues are the recognition: of the significance of models in knowing; that we all use many different models; that some are static, some evolving; that they can be transformed in function to generate new knowledge and new power, and that this last factor is vital to education.





greater adherence, or make greater insights possible."

Mythic models are characteristic of theologies and are meant to motivate adherence, and to limit the directions that knowing may take. The second form is the scientific model. It calls for adherence to procedures of discovery, control and prediction of natural processes so that new insight might continually arise. There is no claim made concerning the truth of these gained insights, only concerning the adequate functioning of them. That something indeed does seem to function as described is verification of the methods used, and not of the truth of the description.

Balth points out what is already obvious: that the methods of inquiry, of reflective thought, which are so important to present-day school curricula derive from "a scientific model of the universe, in which every element of nature is bound to every other in a functional way." The third form is the historical model which explains events by relating them to past events and by interpreting them in the context of these relationships. It is the positing of chronological significance in the relationships of thoughts and their interpretations. The fourth form is the ideological model. The real world is represented in logically related generalizations which enable man to direct his course properly toward the best goals. Any one of the forms of models may be expressed in combination with any of the types so



that, for example, scientific models are sometimes mathematical, analogical or theoretical.

On the basis of this understanding, Belth asserts that "any discipline can be characterized as a model-making, model-using activity, and that in general each discipline creates, and is identified by, its own distinctive models," and that there are a representation of the theoretical base of the discipline.<sup>68</sup>

### Criteria For A Discipline

Within the context of the above understanding of theory and models in knowing, Belth delineates four criteria common to disciplines.<sup>69</sup> These characteristics act as a summary statement of the nature of scholarly knowing, and as an introduction to the discussion of education as a discipline. They comprise a statement of conditions for disciplined inquiry. Disciplines are characteristic in so far as they fulfill these criteria and are distinguished by the ways and to the extent that the criteria are fulfilled.

The first criteria is a high level of abstraction in dealing with subject matter. The level will vary with

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<sup>68</sup>ibid., p.184.

<sup>69</sup>ibid., pp. 6-14.





disciplines; but all theorize and hypothesize about the nature of their subject matter. Psychology, for example, conceptualizes human behavior, developing theories and laws to explain behavior; whereas philosophy is concerned with the meanings, the relationships, and the impact of such conceptualizations for humanity. The second criterion is a distinct mode of thinking developed within the context of "the procedures common to all disciplines -- exploring, describing, explaining, reasoning and inventing". Belth suggests three distinct modes as central: mathematical thinking, as deducing conclusions from axioms; scientific or experimental thinking, as making judgements and predictions about the material world; and philosophical thinking as exposition of meanings and commitments implicit in deductions and judgements made. How each mode conducts the common procedures of knowing depends on the mode of reasoning used. The third criterion is the specialization of objectives sought. Belth illustrates this criterion by comparing science, mathematics and philosophy. Science seeks to develop laws and theories to explain man's experience of the world; mathematics seeks to formulate rules of validity for understanding the relationships of thoughts; and philosophy seeks to understand the presuppositions of all human endeavors. The objectives of a method are directly related to its methods, so that "acceptance of the objective



depends on agreement upon an operation intrinsic to the discipline".<sup>70</sup> The fourth criterion is a set of moral rules which serve to direct inquiry and to evaluate the results of inquiry. These rules develop in context with objectives and modes of reasoning and are consequently peculiar to each of the various disciplines.

In light of these criteria, academic disciplines are viewed as characterizations or representations of several widely-held, yet distinct, theoretical positions. As such, disciplined or scholarly inquiry is expressive of the basic way of knowing of modern, secular man; and is similar to the way of learning, described earlier under the heading of Cognitive Structuring. The task of education in this context is to study the disciplined ways of knowing in order to facilitate the growth of learning until it emerges as scholarly inquiry in its fullest sense. Chapter Three is an exposition of Marc Belth's understanding of this task. The concern in this exposition is not simply for education as a discipline; rather it is for education as the reconstruction or the re-formation of understanding.

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<sup>70</sup>ibid., p. 11





## CHAPTER THREE

## EDUCATION AS A DISCIPLINE

A Unique Area of Study

The May, 1961 symposium on education held at John Hopkins University dealt directly with the question of education as a discipline. In a paper presented at that conference, John Walton made the following statement:

Education, like many other social sciences, is subject to the great temptation --- the temptation of power over the affairs of men. I fear the urgency and importance of education. It is a region that contains questions, the answers to which matter a great deal to happiness, progress, and even survival.<sup>1</sup>

Walton feels that a lack of organization and of control in educational studies may result in an unauthentic and irresponsible use of power. On the other hand, with a sound and well-organized body of knowledge and with rigorous

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<sup>1</sup>John Walton, "A Discipline of Education" in The Discipline of Education, edited by J. Walton and J.L. Kauthe, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), p. 16.





methods of inquiry the study of education, in time, will develop as "an important social science that will have interest for the serious scholar and long-range practical consequences for society."<sup>2</sup> This positive development, called for by Walton, has already made significant progress. And despite protests such as that of R.S. Peters, made in response to Walton's challenge, that "I just cannot grasp the thesis that education could ever be a discipline in any ordinary sense", educationists are seriously seeking to understand what it is that they are about, what are the common methods they use, and what are the consequences of their endeavors. Peters suggests that the multiple questions asked by educationists are the prior and proper concern of the established disciplines. If educators faced them all as scholars --- they would have to master, individually, each of the various disciplines that may be concerned with educational questions. This, obviously, is an impossibility. He suggests therefore that education be treated for what he thinks it is --- a focal point of several disciplines. "An approach to education which draws more on the established disciplines would not only benefit education but would also benefit the disciplines themselves." The latter benefits

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<sup>2</sup>ibid., p. 16.



would be something like a testing-ground and a meeting-place.<sup>3</sup> This kind of reasoning has resulted in the understanding of education as an "applied" discipline.

Paul Hirst has presented a clear conception of what an applied discipline is, and of education as such. He suggests that educational theorizing is the intermediate process linking educational practice with the different forms of purely theoretical understanding. It is the theoretical structure of many different kinds of organized knowledge which culminates in rationally justified principles for educational practice. According to Hirst's analysis, organized knowledge is broken down into forms, fields and usages. Forms are the broad areas of study, such as science, history, mathematics, philosophy and religion, that differ according to distinct conceptual schemes and validity tests. Fields of knowledge are the artificial units around which the forms are focused --- for example: geography, European history, value theory. The fields use the concepts and tests of the parent forms. Usages are practical theories concerned with using knowledge derived from the fields. There are no unique tests of validity in the practical theories nor do they rely on a related conceptual scheme. They focus on particular rather than general ac-

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<sup>3</sup>R. S. Peters, "Comments" in The Discipline of Education, ibid., pp. 17-22.





tivities and bring all derived principles that are seen to be applicable to bear on the practical concern. Education, engineering and medicine are Hirst's examples of this type of discipline.<sup>4</sup> Educational theorists, working within this framework, study, select and relate the conclusions of scholarly research as they apply to particular aspects of the curricula and methods of the school. What is selected and how it is related depends upon the objectives (whatever they be) of the schools.

The notion that education is an "applied" discipline, a practical concern only, derives from comparing education as a unique discipline with the other familiar disciplines; "... in these terms, there is nothing which education studies that is not already being studied in one of the prevailing disciplines."<sup>5</sup> That is, it only does deliberately what other disciplines do non-deliberately. Thus education can only compare with the others as application does with theory. Marc Belth disputes this understanding on the basis that "There is a difference between instructing in a specific area and the process of education per se." And this process is not comparable analogically to the other disciplines,

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<sup>4</sup>Paul H. Hirst, "Educational Theory" in The Study of Education, edited by J.W. Tibble, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966) pp. 42-58.

<sup>5</sup>Marc Belth, Education as A Discipline, (Boston: Allyn And Bacon, Inc., 1965), p. 6.



but only in terms of the basic criteria applicable to all disciplines.<sup>6</sup>

The examination of the procedure of applying the criteria of a discipline to education, which follows immediately, will clarify what, in fact, educationists are seeking to achieve, how they go about it, and how they justify their procedures. The importance of such an examination for Christian educators is clear when one considers that Christian youth are presently nurtured in an environment of apparent confusion and conflict between secular and religious purposes and ways of knowing. (An elaboration of this point is made in Chapter One above) Insight of the nature of the process of education may indeed lead to a resolution of conflict and, at least, to some new clarification of the role of Christian education. The claim made by James Kuethe at John Hopkins University in May, 1961, is pertinent here:

It is my contention that we know quite a bit more about the process of education, and this, together with increased concern, is one source of the prevalent confusion . . . . some degree of order can be brought out of the chaos by the study of education as an entity in its own right.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ibid., pp. 4-6.

<sup>7</sup> J. L. Kuethe, "Education: The Discipline That Concern Built", in The Discipline of Education, edited by Walton and Kuethe, pp. 73-74.





The question "Is education a discipline?" is not the final concern in this examination. Rather, the question serves to focus attention on the purposes and procedures of responsible educators for the purpose of understanding better an important aspect of the responsibility of Christian educators.

Belth suggests that education operates on a level of abstraction that is adequate for disciplined study but that differs from the other disciplines. It is not concerned in developing explanatory concepts (as in psychology) nor in explaining concepts (as in philosophy), but is concerned with the processes by which these other activities are accomplished.

Education deals with the relationship between concepts and powers nurtured in learners, and with the methods of creating concepts as the inventions of intelligence, in whatever fields these methods come to be employed. It concentrates not so much on the merits of particular ideas and their inclusions in the context of experience, as on the methodology of thinking, of which ideas themselves are the consequences.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 7.





The method of intelligent thinking focuses on the production, the validation and the invention of ideas. The central concern of education is the studying and the establishing of such methodology --- the models for "explaining, exploring, describing, and inventing" and their relationship to "the methods by which these capacities operate."<sup>9</sup>

The concept of education as an applied discipline<sup>10</sup> represents education as the "kind of training which produces observable skills." The concept has lead to four popular views on education: that everyone teaches, that all institutions educate, that all experiences educate, and that the basis for teaching is knowing the "facts". Education as theoretically-based inquiry, on the other hand, seeks the "development of the ability to explore, explain, and invent knowledge."<sup>11</sup> Education as such is not the common and implicit activity of influencing or training; it is a deliberate procedure for studying all behavior that bears on the consequences of instruction. It is carried on in only those institutions that are deliberately concerned with

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<sup>9</sup>ibid., p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>The concept of an applied discipline is a contradiction in the context of this thesis if 'applied' means non-theoretical as it does for Hirst (see above, pp. 74-75, and Hirst, "Educational Theory", p. 55) since disciplines were earlier defined as being theoretically-based ways of knowing (see above pp. 61-64, and Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 4 and pp. 25-38).

<sup>11</sup>Belth, ibid., p. 46.



intellectual growth, and it cannot be reduced to the function of character-building which is characteristic of many cultural and social agencies. "Few, if any, institutions 'educate' their members to question the grounds of their own existence in such a way as to produce fundamental changes in institutional direction, meaning and function." And yet, just that is required of the school; for to educate is "to foster the individual's power to perpetuate 'himself', quite apart from this or that institution."<sup>12</sup> Education as nurture or character-building is only a way to education as "preparing the student for that point in his developing when he can disengage himself consciously, intellectually, from every prevailing institution in favor of one he selects rather than inherits, or in favor of one which he develops for himself." These two concepts of education taken together are continuous and complete; "the second being the developing ability to add quality to the first."<sup>13</sup> The same relationship may be seen between education understood as experience, in itself, and education as the study of deliberate experience. In the first case experience develops a common-sense intelligence and in the second case ex-

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<sup>12</sup>ibid., pp. 49-50.

<sup>13</sup>ibid., p. 51.





perience becomes a test of intelligence and a basis of directing growth.<sup>14</sup> Education, furthermore, is a matter of knowing about "procedures which must be undertaken in order to introduce and improve the power to create knowledge." This kind of knowing incorporates knowing that --- knowing conclusions and the theoretical basis for them, and knowing how --- knowing the procedures used to establish meanings, and instructing others in their use even to the point of creating new meanings.<sup>15</sup>

Belth continues his argument for the uniqueness of educational inquiry by stating that it is the study of theoretical models which form the contexts of knowing intelligently.

When man experiences an event and finds that it extends beyond his powers of explanation, he uses symbols, or tokens, or signs, to give the event some form of continuity in a conceptual or, sometimes, perceptual state. Referring to experiences already shaped thus and understood, he describes a beginning, middle, and ending; connections between the symbols he is using; direction to the event; and an explanatory character to the whole experience. In other words, he propounds a theory, and from it makes a model by which the event is

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<sup>14</sup>ibid., pp. 53-54.

<sup>15</sup>ibid., pp. 54-58.



explicable. Unconsciously or consciously, he establishes a comparative relationship between something he has just undergone and what he already knows well. In that relationship, he ascribes the properties of what he knows to the events he is trying to explain.<sup>16</sup>

This procedure is the central focus of educational study because the transmission of models through which the total environment is explicable is the basic task of the educator. He seeks, at least, an elementary understanding of "the formation and use of models in their present and possible variety, the effect they have on the experiences men undergo, and the thinking made possible by them."<sup>17</sup> This central focus overcomes the isolation of educational theory from educational practice, for the two become one continuous process of hypothesizing, testing and inventing. The subject matter is always the models and methods by which men know intelligently.

It (education, in Belth's sense) is concerned with the function of cognition which produces the subjects men study in order to come to know

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<sup>16</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 60.

<sup>17</sup>ibid., p. 62.



more about themselves, their societies, the world as a physical event, the expressions about that world, and the enjoyment of the world.

The justification for a discipline of education is the complex expansion of knowledge in our modern world which has created the demand for a "conscientious development of the distinctive modes of intelligence which are intrinsic in each discipline." This demand in turn "necessitates a fundamental discipline which addresses itself to the issue of how thinking shapes the very materials encountered in direct and indirect experience."<sup>18</sup>

Education as the study of thinking is seen to be a unique area of study, "perhaps the most creative, certainly the most demanding, .... the most complicated, the most subtle, the most perplexing of all studies."<sup>19</sup> In the remaining sections of this chapter the objectives of education, its particular models of knowing and its evaluative criteria are discussed with a view to implications for curriculum generally and, in the final chapter, for Christian education particularly.

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<sup>18</sup>ibid., pp. 18-22.

<sup>19</sup>ibid., p. 19.





### Educational Objectives

The examination of the unique subject matter of educational inquiry enables one to distinguish between educational objectives and objectives of the schools. School objectives are socially and culturally oriented. For example, the concerns for good citizenship, democratic attitudes, and group cohesion, when these are stated as objectives of the schools, are expressions of prevailing societal values and are, quite justifiably, directives for establishing curriculum content and aims. School objectives usually reflect the social, moral and political compromises of the pluralistic society in which the school functions. Educational objectives, on the other hand, do not represent public policy; rather they reflect the discipline's concern for the development of inventive intelligence. When methods are identified in disciplined inquiry, whatever the discipline, educationists set about to instruct in them and in their improvement. The transmission of social, political and moral concepts is only a part of the educator's goal. He is, beyond this point, interested in the nurture of the "ability to examine how they (concepts) were arrived at and how they are tested, as well as to develop the understanding and skill needed to invent new meanings and new relationships."<sup>20</sup> This major goal of education is not a matter

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<sup>20</sup> Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 12



of social interest and pressure; it is intrinsic to the educational endeavor raised to a high level of abstraction, systematization and directedness. Belth asserts that

the familiar disciplines of physics and psychology employ methods, the philosopher inquires into the meanings of method and its varieties, if any, and the educator has as his objective the study of the impact of method on acts of intelligence, and the invention of method as the irreducible condition for the operation of intelligence. Education becomes a way of raising and answering a question not otherwise asked, a question centering on the problems of improving the ability to think.<sup>21</sup>

Education as a study of methods of inquiring is not an effort to validate those methods, but is an effort to describe them, to explore their potential use and to facilitate the invention of new uses and of new methods. "It makes possible a kind of metaknowledge, a knowledge of the function of the instruments which produce knowledge."<sup>22</sup> In short, education is the study of the various ways of knowing ---

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<sup>21</sup>ibid., p. 13.

<sup>22</sup>ibid., p. 29.





of knowledge-making in whatever context.

The distinction between educational objectives and school objectives must be recognized and consciously maintained because both kinds of objectives must be achieved within the same institutional context. This complex arena for achievement --- the school --- will often determine the ways in which educational objectives are sought; but it will not determine what is sought educationally. The objectives of education derive from the discipline and its inquiry. In particular, these objectives are expansiveness, exploration, and analysis. They characterize the act of education as that process "within which men develop expanding powers of exploration and analysis to construct systems of explanation, control and prediction of events they confront."<sup>23</sup> The act of education is the systematic development of the basic way of knowing defined as knowledge-getting or knowledge-making, and which Belth further defines as the "generic concept of doing."<sup>24</sup> The discipline of education is the study of that development in its limitless variety. Educationists are committed, therefore, to inquiry, that is, to the expansion of intelligence. No

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<sup>23</sup>ibid., p. 44.

<sup>24</sup>ibid., p. 118.



theoretical model can be removed from the scope of this inquiry. To do so, is to transform a theoretical model, useful in understanding, into a doctrine, obligatory for understanding. Education is committed further to meaningful inquiry; that is, to the development of the exploratory powers of perception, of symbol manipulation, and of test and evaluation. Finally, education is committed to inventive inquiry; that is, to the development of the analytic powers of discovering the structure and relationship of present understanding, of modifying these to extend understanding, and of inventing these to create new understanding.<sup>25</sup> These objectives indicate the distinctiveness of educational study. It is directed at understanding and teaching the functions of the basic concept of "doing" or knowing --- exploring, describing, explaining, and inventing, --- which operate "as part of all behavior and, in specialized degrees, of every discipline."<sup>26</sup>

### Educational Inquiry

The methods by which educational objectives are achieved derive from the theoretical model of educational inquiry defined, mainly, by those objectives. That is,

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<sup>25</sup>ibid., pp. 41-44.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., p. 119.





educational methods, like the methods of every discipline, are derived from educational objectives and are appropriate to their fulfillment. Belth asserts that the evolutionary-experimental model provides the context of contemporary secular education.<sup>27</sup> Man is continuous with nature and seeks to adjust himself within his environment and to extend his control or manipulative skills over the environment. He develops, with increasing effectiveness, certain functions of behavior, perception, and conceptualization in his successful transaction with his environment. He gains an understanding, a model or a set of models, which directs his functioning.<sup>28</sup>

Educationally, the evolutionary-experimental model means several things. It requires the culture of the abilities: to increase and expand the area of transaction behaviorally, perceptually and, most important, conceptually; to reorganize one's understanding and infer new relationships; to "act" intelligently - to experiment - upon the environment; to construct an order in the relationships which in turn

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<sup>27</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, pp. 65 and 73-74. The dominance of the evolutionary-experimental model, as defined by Belth, is confirmed by the earlier observation (see above, p. 47) of the non-curricular focus in the structure of knowledge; that is, the concentration on and commitment to the development of relationships and connections of facts and ideas in particular subject areas. This does not mean that Belth's understanding of education is itself above criticism; for, like all ways of knowing, it is an object of continuing inquiry to be altered and changed as man's understanding requires (see below, p. 94).

<sup>28</sup>ibid., pp. 70-75.





facilitates further meaningful conceptualization; and to create or invent new models from which "further methods are derived for expanding power in the world and in human beings", and by which "greater knowledge of continuously expanding possibilities of man and nature" will result.<sup>29</sup> Remembering that education, according to Belth, deals with "the relationship between concepts and powers nurtured in learners, and with the methods of creating concepts or the inventions of intelligence"<sup>30</sup> and that, consequently, it is inquiry directed toward the variety of models by which men structure their understanding --- within the framework of which they reason, make judgments, and provide more meaningful experiences; it is clear that, in asserting the evolutionary-experimental model as the model of educational inquiry, Belth is consistent with the prior claim that theoretical models provide the context for understanding what are the identifying elements or functions of a discipline.<sup>31</sup> That is, Belth's identification of the elements of education is itself consistent with the evolutionary-experimental model of the process of education. This consistency is expressed succinctly in the claims that, educationally, "knowing includes knowing the

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<sup>29</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 200-202 and 211-214.

<sup>30</sup>*ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup>See above, pp. 62 and 67.



procedures by which knowledge is derived" and that education is "exploring the explorative activity itself".<sup>32</sup>

The elements of education in a dynamic world are the describing, explaining, exploring, inferring and inventing powers which enable man to expand his understanding and which are basic in varying degrees to all ways of knowing critically. They may be described as "activities which, occurring in a certain relationship with each other, produce some other specific activity", or as "functions operating together according to an indentifiable pattern or sequence which is itself an element of the whole process."<sup>33</sup>

In evolutionary terms, "elements" refers to the ends of processes which act upon one another and produce new ends. In the process of education, those ends are learners with their histories, events as histories and teachers with their histories. These act upon one another, all of them altering in the operation which is their combined functioning. The separate functions, or interactions, differ not in kind but in degree, according to the evolutionary model.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup>ibid., p. 68.

<sup>34</sup>ibid., p. 74.





This understanding of the elements of education is a significant departure from the more traditional view that the elements of education are functionaries --- teachers, materials (contributed by the disciplines) and students. The latter view derives mainly from Locke's tabula rasa or empty-room concept of mind and is the basis of the "applied discipline" concept of education in which educators are to transmit 'truths' and the right means for discovering the truth to students. The functional approach to education, in which the relationships between the learner, materials, and teacher are seen as transactions<sup>35</sup>, is derived from the Darwinian concept of evolution and is a refashioning of Dewey's interpretation of that concept for education.<sup>36</sup>

The functions which are common to the various elements at all phases in the educational process comprise the basic structure of that process. There are three types of functions in the evolutionary-experimental model of education --- the supportive, the preservative and the deliberative. Supportive functions are the powers of observation or perception, sign or symbol-manipulation operations, and instrument skills (from the use of the most simple tools to the use

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<sup>35</sup>See above, p. 46.

<sup>36</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, pp. 67-75 and 200-206.



of the most complex machines), which facilitate the making of truth, beauty and good. Preservative functions are aspects of memory --- remembering, recording, and storing up the outcomes of experiences --- out of which new understandings may grow. Deliberative functions, "the heart of the educative act", include inference-making, and testing of inferences --- the actual making of truth, good and beauty. Belth describes the whole process of education in terms of the examination, the use, and the instruction of these functions.

In terms of our model, to examine the elements for the purpose of understanding and communicating, or developing these powers in others, is to study the process of education. To use these powers suggests that one is educated, and is able to explore in a conscious, or educated, manner. To proceduralize them is to make them effectively available to others.<sup>37</sup>

Any process that deletes one of the functions is, in fact, an alternative to education. The deletion of the deliberative functions altogether results in indoctrination; that is, in a commitment to a doctrine or belief that inhibits inference-making and testing. Further, any process that

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<sup>37</sup> ibid., p. 77.





limits the deliberative functions is also an alternative to education. Allowing only a partial development of the inferring and testing powers results in dialecticism; that is, in a commitment to certain basic premises from which one can only draw certain logical conclusions, such that "the answers are always present within the premises, or beliefs with which we begin".<sup>38</sup> Both of these alternatives have had a long history in the schools. They are, however, incompatible with the objectives of contemporary education in the main. Both go part way in the process of educating; but neither seek to achieve fully that level of inquiry so fundamental to human knowing --- inference-making and testing. Improving these functions results in that achievement of power which is manifest in disciplined inquiry<sup>39</sup> and which makes fuller use of all forms of reason.<sup>40</sup> Education, as characterized by Belth, enables the individual in the long run to:

(1) Make testable statements about some future behavior which is predicted and hypothetically described before it occurs. Nurturing of this power makes possible the activity of truth-making as well as truth-finding.

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<sup>38</sup>ibid., pp. 77-82.

<sup>39</sup>See above, pp. 62-63, and Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 78.

<sup>40</sup>Belth, ibid., p. 84.





(2) Make justifiable statements about what action should now be taken if certain choices are involved. To nurture this is to develop the capacity for good-making as well as for identifying a prevailing good.

(3) Make descriptive statements identifying qualities or properties that can be found and enjoyed for themselves. Developing this power enhances the potentialities for aesthetic-making and finding. (Italics mine)<sup>41</sup>

Education cannot be exclusively either the quality of believing (the result of indoctrination) or the quality of reasoning (the result of dialecticism). It is and must continue as the process of making truth, good and beauty --- the process of knowing which incorporates both believing (earlier called 'faith') and reasoning (earlier called 'doubt').<sup>42</sup>

Education in all its phases --- as disciplined inquiry generally, as educational inquiry in particular, and as the process of developing the powers of inquiry --- understood in terms of the evolutionary-experimental model is the study of models. It is inquiry into the construction and reconstruction of models for inquiry, into the models presently available, and their productiveness, into particular models actually used in making judgements about the world,

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<sup>41</sup>ibid., p. 79.

<sup>42</sup>See above, p. 7.



into the character and relationship of the elements in the various models of education, and "most important of all, the study of education is directed toward an evaluation of the claims which each model-user makes about his concept of the process of education."<sup>43</sup> Belth concludes from this that there can never be a final claim as to the nature of the elements of education nor as to the character of intelligence.<sup>44</sup> Knowing understood in terms of the evolutionary model is, in part, a matter of being known.<sup>45</sup> Educational inquiry is "that kind of thinking whose objective is the improvement of thinking itself."<sup>46</sup> It operates upon the thinking that has become meaningful understanding, or in other words, the modes of reasoning of the disciplines, including education itself.

The distinctive mode of educational inquiry --- its method --- is the act of thinking:

the act of contemplating the processes of nature, and, with the use of data and of knowledge from a reservoir of memory, shifting the processes about, first symbolically and then

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<sup>43</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 104.

<sup>44</sup>ibid., pp. 104 and 213-214.

<sup>45</sup>See above, p. 46.

<sup>46</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 108.





experientially, until new forms of the processes begin to appear. With these new forms, new outcomes develop.<sup>47</sup>

Like methodology in any discipline, educational method is the consideration of objectives and their adequate fulfillment.<sup>48</sup> Methods are characterized in part by the objectives they are used to fulfill and in part by judgements of their appropriateness to do this. Thus, specific models determine specific methods. However, in knowing and instructing in the methodologies of specific disciplines, the educator seeks the development of a basic methodology (however provisional) in the student; which will enable him to operate within the disciplined study and in the study of disciplines --- in other words, which will facilitate the understanding of specific methods and the creation of new methods.<sup>49</sup> Educational method is, more specifically, that basic methodology --- here called the way of knowing<sup>50</sup> --- which is (1) the

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<sup>47</sup>ibid., p. 112.

<sup>48</sup>ibid., p. 113.

<sup>49</sup>ibid., pp. 115-116.

<sup>50</sup>The continuity between the six functions of the elements of education described by Belth and the characteristics of knowing concluded from the earlier study of critical inquiry (see above, pp. 40-47) can be clarified simply; describing and explaining are similar to relating, exploring is similar to experiencing, inferring and inventing similar to creating, and testing is similar to valuing. Clearly, such a comparison loses something in the making because the functions are operationally, in either abstraction, continuous and interdependent.



power to describe as accurately as possible what there is to be described; (2) the power to explain various model-understandings of a problem, including one's own explanation; (3) the power to handle tools of exploration to the point of a full awareness of the context of exploration; (4) the power to analyze present relationships or connections between elements, to infer new relationships and (5) to test in "action" the reasoning which led to the inferences; and finally, (6) the power to invent or create systematically, yet with "emerging novelty" new models --- new theories, methods, objectives --- of knowing. "There develops, as part of the process, a disposition to go beyond the known forms, or types, of powers, into the development, or at least the contemplation, of powers which, conceivably, might be developed."<sup>51</sup> The development of each of these six skills or powers is dependent on the adequate functioning of the various elements in instruction.<sup>52</sup>

The development of reflective thinking in learners (the educational objective) is culminated in the inventive or creative capacity: The educative act finds fullness in the dynamic operation of the powers of inference and testing on the whole environment

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<sup>51</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 132.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 120-131.





such that human understanding is continually reconstructed and re-formed. Educational inquiry is bound, therefore, to the ever-expanding powers to describe, explain, explore, analyze, and evaluate until these result in invention.

... the creative act derives from concentration on the concept of change in the universe, and therefore, requires a disposition toward that change. The creative act involves the augmentation of powers of observation and new skills: It involves memory offering its resources for the altering and reflective powers of man intrigued by the possibility of showing to others such visions of itself as it might never have the wit to produce, for all its constant change. It is this contemplation of the possible that both separates man from the rest of nature and distinguishes creativity from random novelty. Only man, because of his intelligence, creates and broods and creates again.<sup>53</sup>

How the process of education, directed to this end, is proceduralized depends upon the theoretical models of the disciplines; "in each model the various supportive, conserving, and deliberative elements have somewhat different roles, are different in their importance, and are related differently

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<sup>53</sup>Balth, Education As A Discipline, p. 135.





to the other elements ..."<sup>54</sup> For this reason educational inquiry operates on the methodology of the other disciplines. It seeks to know (and, consequentially through the educative process, to improve) the nature of the involvement of the elemental functions of describing, explaining, exploring, analyzing, inferring and testing --- which comprise the way of knowing common to all intelligent inquiry --- in each of the disciplines. From such knowledge both common and particular implications of educating for disciplined inquiry are drawn and acted upon. Since the particular methods of the different disciplines (the particular relations and interactions of the elemental functions) derive from the unique objectives, materials, and evaluative rules of each of the disciplines; each of them is a distinguishable object of educational inquiry.<sup>55</sup> The educator must inquire into these models (including that of his own discipline), develop an understanding of the particular methods and the models from which the methods derive, and then proceduralize these for the learner so that the latter may, first, be equipped with the "attitudes, conduct and skills" that enable him to be a part of the world about; and, secondly, that the learner with the inventive skills, may "develop new modes of confront-

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<sup>54</sup>ibid., p. 97.

<sup>55</sup>ibid., pp. 138-142. See Belth's illustrative analyses of science, history and art, pp. 143-165.



big world, in order to operate in it, p. 20 of 300, 1st  
 volume: "Education", 56

### Educational Evaluation

The evaluative-corrective criteria of any discipline are the moral rules by which the methods of inquiry are evaluated as adequate for the purpose of achieving objectives. Since these rules derive from the particularities of goals and methods within the theoretical model, it follows that education as a unique discipline will establish self-corrective rules.

If ... moral principles, as rules for maintaining intrinsic functions, cannot be divorced from the character of the function involved, nor from the primary objectives for which the operations are pursued, then ... education alone has the duty to establish its own rules of procedure.<sup>57</sup>

These rules of procedure are then contextual.<sup>58</sup> They derive from the particular theoretical model with which one has organized and directed his inquiry; "and which gives direction to the establishment of laws controlling the

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<sup>56</sup>Balth, Education As a Discipline, p. 212.

<sup>57</sup>ibid., p. 14.

<sup>58</sup>ibid., p. 219.





specific acts called for."<sup>59</sup> Educators must continually struggle with conflicting moral rules which derive from the different operational contexts impinging on the school. 'School' objectives that are socially and culturally oriented impose moral criteria consistent with these objectives. Educational objectives, on the other hand, often call for the application of rules quite contrary. The content of a particular text, for example, might be judged immoral from the former point of view; and, yet, the restriction of access to the book may be immoral from the latter point of view. One of the consequences of recognizing education as a discipline with a unique subject area is the rejection of public (in the sense of 'political') scrutiny over educational methods. The particular model of education held is the source of the evaluative rules which can be applied to methods of inquiry.

In fact, where the study of education involves not the absorbing of others' tactics of exploration, description, explanations, and inventions, but rather the critical analysis of the making of each of these, then it is clear that the moral dimension is limited by this type of inquiry. It would be immoral if, in place of studying how we

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<sup>59</sup>ibid., p. 179.



have thought and judged, we indicated that not only is it not possible to study these, but that it is wrong to do anything but accept both the methods and the conclusions which wise men before us have set down.<sup>60</sup>

Belth examines the mechanistic model of education following from behaviorist psychology to illustrate the evaluative criteria of the evolutionary-experimental model of education. B.F. Skinner, the originator of the teaching-machine, implies, according to Belth's analysis, that education is not contextual. It is not the study of models and all that is implied in such study. For the behaviorist, thinking is "a matter of the skillful employment of memory traces (conditioned responses) in a problematical situation in order to produce in that situation a condition of equilibrium."<sup>61</sup> It is the making of learned responses to environmental situations. Education is the development of such responses. It needs no contextual formulation, no theory, for it is a direct extension of reality --- of the natural world as it is and as it is known.<sup>62</sup> Belth points out that such a view of education is a form of dialecticism;

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<sup>60</sup>ibid., p. 14.

<sup>61</sup>ibid., p. 249.

<sup>62</sup>ibid., p. 250.





"It is a dialectic of the machine envisioned in the flexibility and receptivity of the human organism."<sup>63</sup> Learning in this sense is a matter of behavioral conditioning, of learning appropriate responses to specific conditions of the real world. Thinking is the empirical act of making responses appropriately. In short, the problematic conditions which give rise to thinking determine and therefore limit the consequences of that act. Belth concludes that although the machine model has benefits for education --- particularly in the varied uses of programmed instruction, in its inability to account adequately for creativity in thinking<sup>64</sup> it is something alternative to education.<sup>65</sup>

In his analysis of the machine model of education Belth applies two main criteria of educational evaluation. The first is the "continuing analysis" of concepts of education in terms of the methods of education in studying and proceduralizing models of inquiry. The second is the "continuing effort to reason from this analysis" the conditions of the expansion of intelligent inquiry. Such evaluation involves, always, a judgement as to the adequacy of a concept for the development of the powers of knowing,

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<sup>63</sup>ibid., p. 253.

<sup>64</sup>See above, pp. 96-97.

<sup>65</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, pp. 242-258.





and particularly of the power to create new understanding.<sup>66</sup>  
 The full meaning of this corrective procedure in educational inquiry is summarized by Bell as follows:

The concept of education as the development of procedures within which human beings are concerned with learning entails within it means for identifying, learning and using models through which the world is understood, explained and interpreted. These means or instruments appear in the capacity to explore, discover, describe, explain, reason and invent. Any procedure which fails to develop each of these modes of functioning, or loses one or more of them into a reconstituted concept of another of the functions is, to that extent, less than educative.<sup>67</sup>

The character of educational inquiry, as understood here, is clearly expressed in terms of its meaning for curriculum. An examination of the implications of the evolutionary-experimental model of educational inquiry for the curriculum of the schools serves to conclude this chapter and this entire study of the way of knowing critically, thus far conducted.

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<sup>66</sup>ibid., p. 258.

<sup>67</sup>ibid., p. 251.



### Implications for Curriculum

The contemporary, secular environment cannot, obviously, be encompassed to any great extent by the individual through direct experience. It must be symbolized and organized in some form and be dealt with in an inclusive manner in the classroom. For these reasons education is the study of the symbol systems of models and the procedures for inquiry within models. Educational practice is the process of developing awareness of, analysis of, and invention of such systems and procedures.

(It is) the concentration upon exploring conclusions as they derive from models in order to test their consistency as well as their merit. And beyond that is demanded an equally diligent study and search for alternative models, and for consistent methods of acquainting learners with the models which they have inherited and those which are otherwise available. At last, the function of teaching turns out to be that of directing the development of the ability to create new models in light of which old facts are given new interpretations.<sup>68</sup>

In short, this is the nurturing of the ability to think. This process is clearly cumulative and as such it is it-

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<sup>68</sup> ibid., p. 283.





self systematized and proceduralized --- that is, it operates within model-contexts. Thus Belth defines curriculum as the combination of the models of any particular discipline with the models of education:

... the powers of thinking entailed in the combination of models makes certain intellectual operations feasible which would not otherwise be so. Any segment or level of the educational process can be discovered to be a combination of the models of a discipline ... and the models of educating .... In the combination, the different types of models have salutary effect on each other's operations, and the whole is transformed into something other than the original model of a given subject discipline alone.<sup>69</sup>

Doing history is using the models of the discipline systematically and creatively; learning history is studying the models of the discipline; and teaching history is the crucial process of transforming the learner into the disciplined and creative thinker, or doer, of history --- of combining historical and educational models into a procedure of development. That procedure comprises the curr-

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<sup>69</sup>ibid., p. 264.



iculum of a subject area.

Belth distinguishes three contributing factors to the curricula of the schools --- social determinants, psychological requirements, and the concern for subject matter. He examines these in terms of the educational objective of the development of creative thinking. In the first case, the curriculum is to provide for needs and demands of the contemporary society. This task is compounded by the pluralistic character of a highly secularized society. Consequently, educators must "produce a curriculum with a double objective: tolerance of diversity together with devotion to one's own best insights."<sup>70</sup> However, if the concern of educators is to nurture the ability to think then the study of models accounts for both tolerance of diversity and individual integrity. Since society is the source of models and is itself based on particular models it becomes both the context and an object of inquiry.

In such an examination the social conditions themselves become part of the field of inquiry. But the needs of society, or the specific needs of learners in any immediate sense, now begin to recede as the primary social obligation of education. What replaces then is the duty to nurture

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<sup>70</sup>ibid., p. 269.



the ability to grasp the basis of a given organization, to reflect upon it, and to learn to see the range and significance of possible alternatives.<sup>71</sup>

This view of educational function with regard to societal demands does not dissolve the conflict between "school" objectives and educational objectives discussed earlier.<sup>72</sup> Obviously, the development of creative intelligence facilitates alteration and change of societal models; and if the schools succeed in this development they must fail their obligations to meet the needs of society as it is now. According to Belth,

The best that can be hoped for is that both responsibilities can be met with full effort and a flexibility which will not be inimical to either facet. Society will continue to supply the context within which schooling will proceed. And as it moves toward a condition of expansiveness, that context will be broader and freer, and less exclusive. Moreover, as it becomes more expansive, the role which it gives to theoretical inquiry will become more extensive and more determining, until there develops a condition within which intelligence

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<sup>71</sup>ibid., p. 270.

<sup>72</sup>See above, pp. 83-84.





itself is at work, sustaining those aspects of society which are demonstrably fruitful and altering those which are not.<sup>73</sup>

The development of these conditions within society can be readily identified in the earlier discussion on the secularization of purpose and knowing.<sup>74</sup>

In the second case, the curriculum must take account of the psychological consequences of the use of particular models, and of the psychological requirements for adequate development of the powers of thinking. The first requirement is that there be an accounting of the limitations of particular models for perceiving and conceptualizing. Any model, sooner or later, is found to be inadequate for relating, meaningfully, some data or ideas that arise out of experience or experiment. Unaccountable information leads to the alteration or, eventually, to the invention of models. Education, as understood here, is the deliberate act of nurturing the ability to describe, explore, alter and invent models to account for what is perceived and conceived in the experience of man:

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<sup>73</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 272.

<sup>74</sup>See above, pp. 10-21.



... if there were no such extension of human sensitivity beyond the limits of the models in use, every model would become the final, exclusive determinant of its user's powers of growth of intelligence and insight, and automatically eliminate the possibility of using any other models. It is precisely the lack of coextensiveness between what the organism feels and what the powers of perception comprehend which makes education an ever-expanding process, and experience an ever-changing event.<sup>75</sup>

The second psychological requirement is the study of the conditions in learning which make possible the optimum development of model-using and model-testing in light of the goal of model-inventing. Whatever the findings of psychological research with regard to the learning process, these must be evaluated in terms of, and incorporated into, the particular model of the nurturing process that one holds. Psychological findings may, indeed, be crucial in the development of new educational models; but they do not in themselves constitute such a model. The study of education,

... when it includes the theory of thinking and the psychological findings about the act

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<sup>75</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 275.





of thinking according to that theory ... becomes a unitary event, a more abstractly theoretical discipline, to which the various components become subdisciplines, or contributing disciplines. And a rationale for the organizing principle is finally developed which is a model of education.<sup>76</sup>

In the third and final case, the concept of subject matter as "whatever knowledge and beliefs prevail in the society about us" requires instruction in the models by which society knows; "the choice of subject matter depends upon the interests being generated by, and within, the social setting within which we live."<sup>77</sup> Whatever the interests, subject matter must include inquiry into the historical and analytical aspects of disciplines. However, as indicated earlier,<sup>78</sup> the curriculum is finally directed toward achieving, not the present objectives of the particular discipline being studied, but the educational objective of the development of the powers of thinking. Subject matter arises out of the combination of a discipline's models with educational models and seeks the development of an expansive, understanding which enables man to deliberately go beyond

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<sup>76</sup>ibid., p. 276.

<sup>77</sup>ibid., p. 277.

<sup>78</sup>See above, p. 106.



his present understanding. Subject matter for the educator, concludes Belth, is the expansive understanding of his own discipline:

The subject matter emerges from the distillation of the experiences of mankind, in the terms of the model of inquiry which identifies one of the special disciplines. What it emerges into is a realm for exploration, reshaped by educational models. What it emerges toward is an exposition of the relationship between the models of special disciplines and the models of educational inquiry in the development of expanding intellectual powers.<sup>79</sup>

The various aspects of the concept of the basic or generic way of knowing (defined as the powers of knowledge-making or as the act of thinking) examined in this thesis are preparation for the further examination of Christian education as a way of knowing. Socially, the way of knowing is expressed as secularization and makes particular demands of the Christian educator (Chapter One). Psychologically, the way of knowing is seen as basic to both learning and disciplined inquiry, and its development is held to be necessary for inquiry within all models, including

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<sup>79</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 278.



Christian models (Chapter Two). Educationally, the way of knowing is the basic concern, the basic subject matter of inquiry and its development into creative thinking is the overall objective (Chapter Three). The impact of these demands, requirements, and concerns on Christian education is the subject of the next and final chapter. Throughout this study the assertions are made that there is a unitary way of knowing critically; that this way of knowing is a process characterized by certain defining activities or powers; that it is an abstraction, a conceptualization, of the cognitive processes common to all forms of intelligent inquiry including Christian commitment; and that education for critical inquiry, in whatever context, is the nurturing of this basic way of knowing.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS A WAY OF KNOWING

#### The Failure of Indoctrination

The most sensitive question facing Christian educators at any time must concern the relationship of Christian education to the discipline of theology.<sup>1</sup> Whatever is understood by the concept of theology apparently determines for the Christian, to a great extent, the nature of his function as educator. That is to say, there appears to be a close relationship between the Christian's understanding of theology and his understanding of the objective of Christian education and, consequently, his understanding of how Christian education should function. One way clearly illustrate this point by an examination of three general senses of theology and three corresponding senses of education.

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<sup>1</sup>The term "Christian education" is used in this thesis to refer to any programming of the teaching function within the context of the churches. "Christian educator" refers to any trained individual active in the leadership of that program. The term 'education', or any of its forms, used with the single quotation marks refers to any sense of education other than education as the study of models of knowing. The "discipline of theology" is defined above, p. 30.



tion. Such an examination is the basic task of this chapter; however, emphasis is placed on one particular correspondence --- the last of the three that follow immediately. In preparation for that examination, it may be said in summary that theology, understood in the sense of a theology, presented in a particular statement of belief correlates 'educationally' with indoctrination; theology understood in the sense of the application of the principles of reason to the elements of faith correlates 'educationally' with dialecticism; theology understood in the sense of inquiry into the meaning of Christian commitment correlates educationally with the nurture of the basic way of knowing within model-contexts. Within the framework of James Smart's definition of the task of Christian education one may state a corollary to the general statement that the Christian educator's understanding of theology determines to some extent his understanding of Christian education. Smart suggests that the task of Christian education is to bring the insights of theology to bear on the process of educating and to bring the insights of secular educational theory to bear on "the service of the Word".<sup>2</sup> The first task defined by Smart is reflected in the general statement immediately above.

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<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 30-31.





The second task is reflected in the corollary that the nature of the Christian educator's recognition of the experimental model of education will correlate with the general sense of theology that he holds. In other words, if the Christian educator rejects outright the experimental model of education he is probably theologically committed to a mythic model of the world and 'educationally' to a model of indoctrination; if the Christian educator seeks to isolate some of the methods of the experimental model of education and absorb these into a different model of instruction he is probably committed theologically to an ideological model of the world and 'educationally' to a model of dialecticism; finally, if the Christian educator operates within the experimental model of education he is committed to it and to an evolutionary model of the world. The purpose in stating this corollary to the general statement above is to make clear the full meaning of this study --- that Christian education in the contemporary secular world can be defined in terms of the evolutionary-experimental model and, if it is, must become the most crucial function, the most central focus, of the Church. It follows that the Christian educator must become the responsible agent of the continuous "re-formation" of the Christian understanding of commitment.

In the context of the above statements, it is clear that the Christian educator's task as defined by Smart is a



particularized function of education generally as defined by Belth.<sup>3</sup> That is to say if, as in the latter case, education is seen as the function of combining models of the disciplines with models of education then, as in the former case, Christian education can be seen as the specific function of combining models of the discipline of theology with educational models. The juxtaposing of points of view of theology with points of view of educational theory, in the basic statement above and in the corollary, seems to imply that theology is prior in the Christian educator's hierarchy of values, and that educational theory is secondary. At the same time, the emphasis on education in this thesis may seem to imply that educational theory is prior to theology in the Christian educator's understanding of his task. Neither implication is intended. There need not be, and there probably should not be, any priority established in this regard (where there is, it should be acknowledged) as shall be indicated in the third section of this chapter. Suffice it to say here that the Christian educator is involved in the disciplined inquiry of educational models, and that as a Christian educator his inquiry is directed

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<sup>3</sup>See Chapter Three; see particularly pp. 77-80 above.





to the study of theological models.<sup>4</sup> His task is to combine these models and, by doing so, to extend the nurture of Christian youth in theological thinking; it is not to set one kind of model over another so as to limit the development of theological thinking in Christian youth.

Christian indoctrination tends to set a theological model over an instructional model. More clearly, it promotes an uncritical commitment to a particular theological position. This is well stated by Belth in terms of indoctrinating particular philosophies of life:

educational quality ... ceases when philosophy determines education rather than being explored and exposed by the procedures which describe the educative act ... Any time we accept a so-called philosophical belief, and then try to draw out its "educational implications", we have turned away from education as a laboratory for explor-

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<sup>4</sup>Smart summarizes this whole concept of the nature of the Christian educational inquiry in the statement that "... (Christian education) must conduct its own careful researches in the light of its own objectives and aims." (p.42) What Smart states negatively (study the immediate context of this statement) and almost insignificantly (note his emphasis on the Christian educator as theologian and on Christian education as a part of the discipline of theology, p. 41), is positively stated here as the most significant characteristic of Christian education.





ing meanings and the grounds of postulates,  
toward an unembarrassed program of indoctrin-  
ation.<sup>5</sup>

Any theological position that determines the nature of instruction ends up indoctrinating others into that position. To hold a particular theological position as the only valid expression of Christian faith involves a Christian commitment that demands a completely uncritical acceptance of doctrine, and often of a summarized credal expression of those doctrines. Such an understanding of theology represents a breakdown of the theological function as defined by Smart<sup>6</sup>; and it represents a removal of theology from the ongoing work of the Church.<sup>7</sup> Christian truth in this sense of theology is established once for all either in the Bible --- to be gained by literally reading it, or in the doctrines of the Church --- to be accepted as truth finally established. Total commitment in the first case is gained by radical conversion, and in the second case by catechetical submersion.

Gerald Slusser defines a theological position which

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<sup>5</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup>Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, pp. 32-34.

<sup>7</sup>Slusser, The Local Church In Transition, pp. 64-69.



sees itself as the only position as "one that is largely borrowed; it is a secondhand system that he (the Christian minister) has not really thought through as to its grounds and adequacy".<sup>8</sup> Slusser identifies several types of ministry which develop instructionally on the basis of indoctrination. The uneducated evangelical ministry has a "theological training ... of a highly biased nature, mainly an indoctrination with that particular denomination's doctrinal prejudice". The pietistic movement is non-theological in the sense that it "does not seek to love the world ... but to find security from the world"; and it implies a theological position that "is not thought out or expressed".

There is no grappling with theology because theology is believed to be irrelevant. When educated piety uses the word "theology", it usually means one of the nineteenth-century renditions of a classical system ..."

The educated orthodox ministries of the various confessional churches preserve their theology in their creeds, their liturgies, and their catechisms. "Having once learned a theological system, they are convinced that they now have

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<sup>8</sup>ibid., p. 64.





the answers .... Alteration is neither desirable nor possible." Finally, the institutional promoters who follow a functional theology of business succeed within anyone of the theological positions above except the denominational position and "hold (it) in an unexamined way ..."<sup>9</sup> Slusser's criticism of fundamentalism, that "it wants to believe it knows the truth more than it wants to know the truth"<sup>10</sup>, can be applied to all of these positions.

Ministries that understand theology in the sense of a particular theology correspond to what Bolith calls the mythic model of knowing.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that there is a mythic element in every model of the world, which

gives quality and significance to the descriptions and explanations which we offer about our experiences .... we need only remember that some model of primary factors and variables lies at the base of every view of the world.<sup>12</sup>

When, however, that basic element ceases to provide simply

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<sup>9</sup>ibid., pp. 65-68. See also, pp. 33-37.

<sup>10</sup>ibid., p. 42.

<sup>11</sup>See above, pp. 67-68.

<sup>12</sup>Bolith, Education As A Discipline, pp. 180-181.



a basis for knowing and determines the context of knowing it becomes itself a model of the world. A mythic model is one that is unaware of itself as a model, and which promotes its tenets as a statement of reality rather than as a particular ordering of man's experience of reality. The result, according to Belth, is superstition --- the projection of unfounded ideas onto the elements of reality.

For example, many Norse myths include models of the universe in which things are the enemies of man .... Thus, it is explained that the man who fell and broke his arm was punished by the very tree which he had bruised with his ax. This is but a simple form. A much more subtle one might be a model of a world in which words are alive and knowing. They have the powers of men in greater force than men, and must be respected and held sacred as men are not.<sup>13</sup>

It is not difficult to make the connection between this statement and Slusser's description of untheological ministries. Words, either as biblical or doctrinal statements, take on a reality of their own so that to know what is real one must know the literal meaning of the words.

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<sup>13</sup>ibid., p. 181.



To know adequately is to adhere to the words. One might have 'faith' in the words. Faith in this sense is a way of knowing God that is opposed to 'doubt' as a way of knowing the world, because the latter either ignores or contradicts the former. Indoctrination is the nurturing of uncritical adherence to the beliefs or ideas expressed in credal statements. It "would seem to have as its goal commitment to a belief, or acceptance of some doctrine (and manifestation of a pattern of conduct called for in this doctrine), without possibility of any deviation from an established standard."<sup>14</sup>

The failure of indoctrination can be seen on all counts. The secular society makes certain demands on any educative system that seeks to integrate that society into a world-view. These demands arise out of the earlier description of human knowledge as specialized, innovative, functional and original.<sup>15</sup> They are that instruction allow for pluralism and for independence in knowing.<sup>16</sup>

Indoctrination fails to meet the demands of secular society for, in the first case, it rests on the assumption that one particular statement of beliefs is the only real knowledge

<sup>14</sup>ibid., p. 78.

<sup>15</sup>See above, pp. 17-21.

<sup>16</sup>See above, p. 106.





man can attain; and, in the second case, it assumes an authority that minimizes, indeed that denigrates, the authority of human experience. It seems inconceivable that, in a culture whose very ongoing development has depended on a high level of diversification and individual freedom, any one group should genuinely demand and expect to gain total adherence to a simple, unrelated world-view founded upon a removed and arbitrary authority. Indoctrination fails, furthermore, in meeting the psychological requirements of knowing. Highly formalized knowledge is seen to be received by man in just that form --- originally from a supernatural force and thereafter through a direct transmission of established faith. There is no accounting for the development of human understanding in learning and in disciplined inquiry. Finally, indoctrination fails to take account of itself. It does not, cannot, acknowledge any distinction between what is known and the knowing of it. It denies the whole area of educational inquiry into the use of models and the invention of models. The act of indoctrination assumes that reality is the doctrinal or biblical position. Consequently, knowing is possessing reality, and is not a process of structuring and restructuring what is experienced as real. Knowing, as a process of creating and recreating understanding depends, educationally, on the development of the power to make



inferences. Knowledge understood as a possession, on the other hand, does not allow for inference-making, for the re-formation of understanding to account for new experiences and insights. It allows only for immediate acceptance ('faith') in the form of sudden conversion, and for immediate rejection ('doubt') in the form of rebellion.<sup>17</sup> As the means of acquiring adherence to a particular set of beliefs, indoctrination is something less than education. The Christian educator who seeks to fulfill his obligation as educator must reject indoctrination as an adequate way of knowing.

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<sup>17</sup>See Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church pp. 162-163, for a detailed discussion of this type of crisis decision-making.





### The Limitations of Character-Building

Theology understood in the sense of the application of the principles of reason to the basic elements of faith represents what Belth calls an ideological world-view.

Ideological models are collected and distilled sets of generalizations which may have been derived from some primary experience or not, simply have been invented, but which are treated as the logical, but nevertheless true, parallels of the empirical world. Being purely conceptual, that is, the elements being related to one another by the laws of logic, they have a quality of perfection which is held to be fundamental to the substratum reality of the experienced world.<sup>18</sup>

An ideological model may correlate with indoctrination as a way of knowing<sup>19</sup>; but it is likely to have a higher correlation with dialecticism as a way of knowing, in which,

Traditionally, the dialectic is the code of reasoning developed in early Greek logic.

From a major premise and a minor premise in

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<sup>18</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 182.

<sup>19</sup>A good example of the ideological-indoctrination correlation is the apparently effective system of instruction called "Ho-think" that the Chinese communists have initiated.



a variety of forms, simple and complex, single and multiple, certain conclusions, which are already detailed within the premises, are brought forth. These are presented as proof, first of the worth of the premises, and then of the truth of the conclusion itself. When this form of reasoning is transformed so that its characteristic pattern is ascribed to the movements and changes of the whole world, and to all existence, then that pattern becomes the model for reality. According to this model, thought reflects the nature of reality and, therefore, possesses the same structure as reality. More important, the ways of reality are as logical as the laws of thought.<sup>20</sup>

Thomism is undoubtedly the highest developed ideology of the Christian religion. It assumes that God as the prime mover has created an ordered movement -- a natural law -- in the universe. All critical knowing is based on that first assumption and follows that order. Truth, beauty and goodness can be known maximally through the application of reason to man's experiences, when the basic premises are the tenets of right faith --- the beliefs of the Catholic Church --- which are held as the revelation of absolute truth. A more subtle illustration of ideology

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<sup>20</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 81.



as a way of theologizing is the liberal movement within Protestantism. Liberalism grew out of the nineteenth-century "awareness of the principles of justice and truth and goodness, (and) loyalty to the spirit of truth that is identified with the Spirit of God."<sup>21</sup> It holds that man is basically good; that he participates in a harmony which originates with the Creator, that underlies the natural world, and that provides the context of the development of human perfectibility. The way of development is the application of rational thought to the elements of life. In the American context liberal theology is, as well, a concern for "the sociological problems that the church faced and the need to use ... 'the Christian ideology' as the basis for the reconstruction of personal and social life."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, liberalism is the concern for the intellectual and moral development of Christian understanding. Like Thomism, liberalism contains within its basic assumptions the outcomes of its application of reason.

Smart and Slusser, in pointing out that liberalism results in moralism, in a nurture of character which is basically non-Christian, express the 'educational' outcome

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<sup>21</sup>Slusser, The Local Church in Transition, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup>ibid., p. 55.





of ideology.<sup>23</sup> Belth expresses this outcome in terms of dialecticism:

The model which makes reason and reality replicas of one another gives society the status of a deductive system. Thus, when disputes develop about the details, and about the validity of the claims made against authority, the individual is secured against error. For the dialectical system itself has identified both acceptable thought and thought which is illicit, immoral, irreverent, or outright heresy.<sup>24</sup>

When the right mode of reasoning, that is deductive reasoning, is taught, the right behavior and belief are secured. In the same way that the Sunday School movement and its goal of conversion are expressive of the mythic-indoctrination model combination, so too the Religious Education Movement and its task of nurturing character are expressive

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<sup>23</sup>Glusser, The Local Church in Transition, pp. 37-40, and Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, pp. 54-61.

<sup>24</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 83.



of the ideological-dialectic model combination.<sup>25</sup>

Dialecticism as an 'educational' model is greatly limited in fulfilling the demands, requirements, and concerns made of any educational system. Character-building represents a misunderstanding of the forces which impinge on its agency. The demand that an educational system take account of and seek to develop both pluralism and individual integrity in knowing is only partially met by dialecticism. In so far as the individual is taught to reason out the answers he participates, to a limited extent, in the development of character. He is enabled to apply inductive logic to those problematic situations for which solutions are not readily available. To the extent, however, that individual integrity is secured in this mode of thought, pluralism is denied. Only one kind or type of

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<sup>25</sup>See Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, pp. 49-61, 70-72, 77-80, 92-107, and Glusker, The Local Church in Transition, pp. 26-33, 37-40, 43-47, 54-57, for an outline of the history of these movements and their relationships to evangelicalism and liberalism. Both authors are greatly concerned with the theological inadequacies of these educational programs, and adequate documentation of such can be found in their works. The concern in this thesis is more specifically with the educational failures and limitations of particular models of Christian nurture, and only generally with theological inadequacies. It is sufficient here to say summarily that liberalism, in seeking to overcome the failure of evangelicalism in demanding adherence to particular theologies, resulted in the theological confusion and baselessness of legalistic and idealistic moralism.





knowing, that is, only logical deduction is nurtured. The specialization and functionality of knowing within a secular society demand that educational programs nurture variety and flexibility in the means of finding solutions to problems.

The psychological limitations of dialecticism are more subtle. Dialecticism easily slips into the transmission of ready-made answers on the basis of an external authority, and knowing becomes a matter of accepting answers uncritically. Belth's statement of this inadequacy is particularly descriptive of much Christian nurture:

(One) comfortable aspect of this ... is that if we cannot reason, someone else will do it for us. This fact results in a hierarchy of authority of knowledge. The authority of whoever is at the highest point of the hierarchy is perfectly secure for, since he has the highest authority, his answer is created when he speaks. The authority, like the premise, is self-evidently correct.<sup>26</sup>

When the learner is nurtured to accept answers, and nurture of the ability to reason ceases, the requirement that the content and method of instruction be related to the learner's developing capacity to think is ignored. Answers are

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<sup>26</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p.83.



transmitted in their highly abstract and systematic form rather than in a form commensurate with the level of psychological readiness of the student.<sup>27</sup> The result is that character can only be achieved by conforming to standards, and least of all by reasoning what are those standards. The further consequence is that the individual is incapacitated in problematic situations except as solutions are made available to him by others.

The power of deductive reasoning, when it is nurtured in learners, limits the power of the learner to create new understanding. What is learned is the ability to relate ideas and to extend understanding in one manner and in one direction only. The basic way of knowing represents, educationally, a concern for the optimal growth of the various abilities to cope with problematic situations and with the development of creative power in thinking; it is not a concern for one specific method and direction only. Dialecticism seeks, however, to limit the way of knowing to one kind of thinking, to one source of information, and to one model of reality;

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<sup>27</sup>See above, pp. 57-58.





it reduces inference-making to a form of deduction which equates valid statements with empirically true statements. The world itself is a model of dialectic movement ....

Instead of employing all of one's powers, one need only accept the memory of certain ideas and beliefs within the prevailing model in order to discover the next step to take. The deductive process continues to give the same answers to the questions that recur ... (and) we come to accept our answers as the answers. Thus, the learning of the appropriate responses takes on the quality of the model itself.<sup>28</sup>

To the extent, then, that dialecticism as a model of instruction presents itself as parallel to reality, and limits the way of knowing to one way consistent with that model, or worse, to conformity with that model, it is less than educative.

### Education for Understanding

Indoctrination when it confronts the evolutionary-experimental model of education must reject it outright because the latter model is a world-view which accounts for variety and change in human understanding. The former

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<sup>28</sup> Nelth, Education As A Discipline, p. 82.





model is, on the other hand, a negation of variety and change. Dialecticism assimilated the idea of change in the concept of the growth of character; but it limits that growth to a predetermined pattern. It fails to recognize diversity in the sources of knowledge, in the ways of knowing, and in the objectives of knowing. Education, understood in terms of the evolutionary-experimental model, is an open and complete acceptance of variety and change in human understanding. It is the study of the abstracted, basic way of knowing which operationally is the power to describe, to explain, to infer, to test, and to develop understanding. It develops these powers within particularized ways of knowing --- the models of disciplined inquiry. It seeks to nurture the ability to cope, to order, and to manipulate the elements of man's environment. Its highest development is the power to create new and varied understandings. To this extent it seeks the demands of a secular society for pluralism in understanding, and integrity in knowing.

All three models of the world --- mythic, ideolog-  
ical and evolutionary -- seek the development of the sup-  
portive and the preservative functions of knowing. A well-  
developed ability in the use of muscular, perceptual, and  
conceptual skills and the capacity to remember is essential  
to human existence. But when nurture is aimed at only



this level of achievement, as it is in induction, the individual is unable to live in a world-sized world. He is forced to remove himself from that world of change and variety, and to operate within the rigid context of a doctrinally defined world. He creates a condition of alienation between his world --- the only real world --- and the non-world or negative world. Since the non-world does not employ 'doubt' --- as uncertainty and as probability in knowing, and since he has experienced only 'faith' --- as certainty and actuality, he assumes that faith is a way of knowing God who is the center of the real world, and that doubt is a way of knowing all things that are not related to God in the same way as he is related and that are therefore evil.

The ideological world view is based on a limited development of the deliberative functions, as in dialecticism. There exists in the world a God-given order and pattern. That order in human thought takes the shape of logical deduction. Inference-making that conforms to the rules of deduction represents man's highest intellectual achievement. Inference that follows any other form denies the existence of logical order and finally must deny the existence of God. It therefore represents the rejection of divinely-ordered truth, and it represents man divided against God. Order and purpose are revealed by God, and by applying the conditions





of order to his intellectual and moral development can approach the fulfillment of purpose. 'Faith' as the acceptance of revealed truth about the nature of God, and 'doubt' as the application of the principles of deductive reason to the problematic to ascertain the nature of the world, become successive. The former determines the rightness of the latter.

The evolutionary world-view seeks the expansive development of the deliberative functions within any context, as in the experimental model of education. Since the individual relates to his environment in terms of models or, in other words, in terms of conceptual pictures of the environment, the appropriateness of his model is measured in terms of his facility to describe and explain what he experiences, to explore what he has not experienced before, to infer new connections and new patterns on the basis of his exploration, and to test inferences through the manipulation of the environment. The optimal development of man's understanding is the power to change the context of his knowing and to create new models with which to order the environment on the basis of his expanded understanding. Knowledge of God in terms of: the divine nature, of his world, of his relationship to man, and of his purposes for man, gained by: revelation, reason, intuition, and experience, is incorporated into model forms to provide the



context, the means, and the criteria for the expansion of understanding. Faith, in this context, is a conceptualization of man's capacity to continually organize and pattern and alter his understanding of the environment<sup>29</sup>, and to function meaningfully within it. Doubt is a conceptualization of man's capacity to continually examine and evaluate his modelling, and on that basis to make inferences about its possibilities. Within the context of the basic way of knowing, faith and doubt are seen to be inextricably bound together. They are seen to be continuous activities or functions, incorporating the powers of describing, explaining, exploring, inferring, testing and creating. Operationally, faith and doubt are inseparable and indistinguishable in the sense that either one is meaningless apart from the other. As concepts they represent the basic character of human intelligence in so far as "only man ... creates and broods and creates again."<sup>30</sup>

Both the mythic model and the ideological model fail to distinguish between reality and a model of reality. Both models, in one way or another, accept their knowledge of the environment as the environment. The doctrines to be taught

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<sup>29</sup>The concept "environment" refers to the totality of man's awareness, both perceptual and conceptual.

<sup>30</sup>Bell, Education As A Discipline, p. 135.





or the dialectic to be understood arise directly out of the natural and/or supernatural world. They are continuous with that reality. In accepting the dialectic and in mastering the dialectic, one achieves final and complete harmony with the forces of reality. The evolutionary-experimental model, on the other hand, takes cognizance of man's ongoing endeavor to achieve harmony, both by adjustment and by invention, with his environment. Order and system are not passively received by man from reality; They are actively and adequately imposed on the environment by man in the form of models. When order and system fail to account for elements of the environment, the models are altered and, if necessary, new models are created to achieve a new harmony. Education is the process of developing the capacity in learners to model the environment in just this way. It achieves this by developing the basic way of knowing through the methodology of the various disciplines. Theology, as the discipline of the Church taking into serious question its own existence and incorporating into its allegory as the Church of God<sup>31</sup>, is something other than a finally-established body of truth and something more than a particular way of establishing truth.

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<sup>31</sup>Shart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, p.38.





It is critical inquiry into the meaning of Christian commitment. Theology in this third sense is process rather than doctrine or system. In this sense it is understood as a highly organized type of inquiry --- as a discipline, with its own models, its own objectives, its own methods, and its own rules.<sup>32</sup> Christian education as a function of the church has as its tasks: first, the study of theological and educational models; second, the combining of the models of theology with the models of education; and third, the nurture of the powers to explore the models of theology, to make inferences on the basis of these, and to invent new theological and educational models in the expansion of understanding what it means to be the Church of God. The process of nurturing these powers incorporates the acts of believing, reasoning and inventing into one act performed in various ways. That is to say, it incorporates the qualities of adherence, of character, and of creativeness in the continuous process of knowing intelligently. This process within the Church takes the form of a continuing re-formation of the meaning of Christian commitment. This entire study culminates in a brief, theoretical examination of that process.

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<sup>32</sup> See Paul Tillich's "Introduction" in Systematic Theology, Vol. I, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 34-66, for a detailed statement of the objectives, methods and norms of the discipline of theology.



### The Basis of the Continuing Reformation

Paul Tillich, in his introduction to his Systematic Theology, defines the nature of reformation theology. A summary statement of that definition will serve to clarify both the underlying assumption and the basic principle of education for theological reformation. It is important to note that though the statement of assumption and principle presented here is borrowed from Tillich, there is no requirement made that his particular systematic (his model of theology) be assumed. The statement presented is simply Tillich's stylization of that event which is the starting-point of all theology, and of that endeavor which is the ongoing task of all theology. The statement presents the assumption on which the Church exists, and the principle by which it continues to become the Church. Theology, according to Tillich,

(is) the methodical explanation of the contexts of the Christian faith. This definition is valid for all theological disciplines. The criterion of every theological discipline is whether or not it deals with the Christian message as a matter of ultimate concern.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>ibid., p. 28.





Theology, as such, arises out of the event of Jesus as the Christ, which establishes a binding tension between the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal (traditionally expressed as the doctrine of the divine-human natures in one person).

Christian theology .... implies the claim that it is the theology. The basis of this claim is the Christian doctrine that the Logos became flesh, that the principle of the divine self-revelation has become manifest in the event "Jesus as the Christ". If this message is true, Christian theology has received a foundation which transcends the foundation of any other theology and which itself cannot be transcended. Christian theology has received something which is absolutely concrete and absolutely universal at the same time. No myth, no mystical vision, no metaphysical principle, no sacred law, has the co-existence of a personal life. In comparison with a personal life everything else is relatively abstract. And none of these relatively abstract foundations of theology has the universality of the Logos, which itself is the principle of universality. In comparison with the Logos everything else is relatively particular. Christian theology is the theology in so far as it is based on the tension between the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>ibid., p. 16.



The consequence of that tension for humanity is the Protestant principle (traditionally expressed as the principle of justification by grace through faith). Theologically, that tension results in the protest:

against the identification of our ultimate concern with any creation of the Church, including the biblical writings in so far as their witness to what is really ultimate concern is also a conditional expression of their own spirituality. Therefore, it is able to use all the materials provided by church history. It can make use of Greek and Roman and German and modern concepts in interpreting the biblical message; it can make use of the decisions of doctrinal protests against official theology; but it is not bound to any of these concepts and decisions.<sup>35</sup>

Theology as protest, as reform, is bound only to the source -- the tension binding the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal -- the event of Jesus as the Christ. In the concept "Jesus as the Christ" and "Protestant Principle" Tillich identifies the event which is the source of all Christian commitment, and "the source which is the basis of all Christian inquiry. All modes of reform theology are contexts within which this event is understood

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<sup>35</sup> ibid., p. 37.



and within which this movement is carried on.

The Christian educator is the responsibility of capturing belief and character as qualifications for the effective ministry of the church to create new beliefs, new theological systems of Christian thought. The basis of that responsibility is both theological and educational. Theologically, it is that the Church continually renews and reforms its self-understanding, and that it does so through all persons led by the Spirit:

Theology is a task of the whole church, not any part of it, for it is certain to Protest-ants that God does not particularly give his inspiration to scholar or devocate as such, but to the whole church. Some must lead, of course, but a living theology will have to be forged in dialogue with God's people.<sup>36</sup>

Educationally, the responsibility of the Christian educator derives from the objective of the education of intelligence;

where the educator performs his function of exposing and nurturing the powers of exploring and analyzing the models which shape our world, he makes it possible for each age to

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<sup>36</sup>Glusker, The Local Church in Transition, p.172.





confront in new terms, with new instruments of thought, the experiences which impinge directly upon it ... he makes it possible for each member of that generation to set the world into an order which would reflect his own growing powers of comprehension, vision, inventive projection, and model-making.<sup>37</sup>

The nature of belief, character, and creativity involves educational inquiry into the models of church history, biblical scholarship, liturgics, Christian ethics, and systematic theology. It involves inquiry into educational models themselves. It requires that the Christian educator combine models of theology and models of education into procedures for the optimal development of all the powers of knowing -- supportive, preservative, and deliberative. It is definitive of the educator's function, as understood here, that none of the functions of knowing is neglected or limited in Christian growth. Finally, it is his objective that the process of education culminate with the development of the deliberative powers, and more particularly with the power to create new understanding of the meaning of being the Church of God. Christian education is, in these terms, a way of knowing; and as such, it is

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<sup>37</sup>Belth, Education As A Discipline, p. 306.



the basis of the continuing reformation. It is the process of developing the power to re-form the Church's understanding of its commitment to Jesus as the Christ, and of its mission under the tension binding the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal. That is, it is the education of Christians to the task of inquiring critically and continually into the failure of the Church, which must always be recognized, to be the Church of God. Finally, to summarize, Christian education is the agency of the Church nurturing its members for the ongoing task of relating the existence of man to the revelation of God, of evaluating that relationship, and of creating new forms of that relationship.

Christian education as education for reformation is not presented as a panacea for the contemporary ills of the Church in finding itself in the secular world. Indeed, it is an incorporation of uncertainty into the very life of the Church. More irrationality appears in the Church's testimony because of the search for panaceas for irrelevance and decline that arises out of the transcendent reality of that event on which the Church is founded. There is truly an uncertainty, a probability, about the Church's understanding of the meaning of that event, just as there is truly a certainty, an actuality about the Church's assertion that the event is meaningful. Christian education as education





for reform is a process of maintaining uncertainty within the context of certainty, of holding the probable within the context of the actual, of re-forming the ways of knowing within the context of what is known. To this extent, the Christian educator, "in the service of the Word", functions: to maintain the vital connection between biblical faith and the process of secularization (Cox's concern<sup>38</sup>), to normalize the frustration and anxiety arising out of the effort to know God and world in relationship (Hewbigin's concern<sup>39</sup>), to minimize the confusion and indifference arising out of the lack of relationship between the tasks of education and theology (Smart's concern<sup>40</sup>), to overcome the break between believing, knowing, and doing in faithfulness to Jesus as the Christ (Glosser's concern<sup>41</sup>). Christian education as a way of knowing inquires into the study of Christian commitment; more particularly, it proceduralizes the nurture of the re-formation of that commitment; more significantly, it enables the Christian to achieve power in that commitment.

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<sup>38</sup>See above, pp. 26-27.

<sup>39</sup>See above, pp. 28-30.

<sup>40</sup>See above, pp. 30-32.

<sup>41</sup>See above, pp. 32-34.



## Conclusion

The basic way of knowing, as developed here from various points of view, is the conceptualization of the common activities and powers which operate in all particular ways of knowing. The operation of the basic way of knowing in the methodologies of critical inquiry results in knowledge that is characteristically tentative and continuous. Tentativeness and continuity in knowing are essential to the expansion of human understanding, and Christian commitment is consistent with all other human understanding in this regard. The tentativeness of Christian commitment, in terms of the secular characterization of knowing as functional and original, is expressed as the Protestant principle; in terms of the psychological characterization of knowing as critical inquiry, it is expressed as theological inquiry; in terms of the educational characterization of knowing as creativity, it is expressed as the 're-formation' of understanding. The continuity of Christian commitment, in terms of the secular characterization of knowing as specialized and investigative, is expressed in the basic assumption of Jesus as the Christ; in terms of the psychological characterization of knowing as the development of powers, it is expressed as Christian education; in terms of the educational character-



ization of knowing as occurring within social-contexts, it is expressed in the Church of God.

Christian education is the process in which the tentativeness and the continuity of Christian commitment are meaningfully related. The Protestant principle is meaningful only in terms of Jesus as the Christ, and the event continues only through the endeavor to discover its meaning for man. Further, theological inquiry, as the power to 're-form' Christian understanding, can only continue on the basis of the nurture of that power, and the nurture of that power must be proceduralized in terms of that inquiry. Finally, the 're-formation' of Christian understanding can only take place within the Church as context, and the Church becomes the Church only through the ongoing 're-formation' of its commitment. Christian education, as the process of nurturing the power to 're-form' Christian commitment, places on the Christian educator the awesome responsibility of maintaining the relationship of tentativeness and continuity in Christian knowing.





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